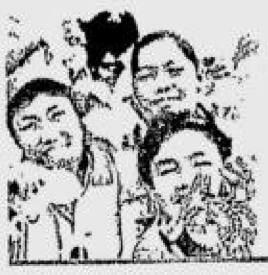
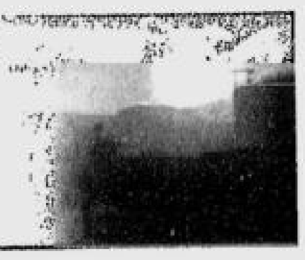


■ SPORTS / A17
Unanimous choice: Team Philippines PSA Athlete of the Year

■ METRO / A16
Fake dollar bills, bank notes seized

■ NEWS/ A2
Veep votes recount begins; sparks fly

■ WORLD / A8
Blasts set off huge blaze near London



Ex-Isafp chief's silence baffles GMA supporters

By Michael Lim Ubac and Dona Pazzibugan

FORMER TOP MILITARY SPY TIRSO DANGA'S intriguing silence yesterday bolstered the belief of congressional sources that he may have a mouthful to say about who ordered the bugging of President Macapagal-Arroyo and ex-poll offi-

EX-ISAFP/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Ex-agri official gives senators the slip anew

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Leila B. Salaverria

"CATCH ME IF YOU CAN" may well be what former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante is telling the Senate as he

EX-AGRI / A6

ABA ?! PARANG SI PALOS !

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Tuesday, December 13, 2005 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 5 P18
website: www.inq7.net

AFP: We're doing probe

ASEAN leaders wave as they arrive for the plenary session of the 11th Asean Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center. From left: Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, the Philippines' President Macapagal-Arroyo, Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Laos' Prime Minister Bounnhang Vorachith. REUTERS

But military won't talk on inquiry into wiretapping

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

AFTER MONTHS OF STONEwalling, the Armed Forces turned around yesterday and claimed it had been investigating the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal since it broke out in June.

But Col. Tristan Kison, the military spokesperson, could not give an update on the "internal investigation" being conducted by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

Kison also declined to answer questions on how T/Sgt. Vidal Doble explained to his superiors in Isafp his involvement with former National Bureau of Investigation deputy chief Samuel Ong, who said he obtained the master tape of the Hello Garci tapes from Doble.

"That's precisely the focus of the investigation: To find out whether or not there was wiretapping. If ever there was, which unit did that?" Kison told reporters. He said the findings would not necessarily be made public "because this is an internal investigation."

When Marietta Santos told a Senate hearing last week that Doble, her boyfriend, was part of a 14-man team from Isafp that wiretapped President Macapagal-Arroyo and for-

AFP / A4

Free Suu Kyi, Asean leaders urge Burma

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—Southeast Asian leaders on Monday pressed Burma (Myanmar) to expedite democratic reforms and release detainees, in the strongest public slap on the wrist yet for the country's junta at one of the regional bloc's summits.

The reference to Burma's politics in a chairman's statement issued at the end of Asean's annual summit in Kuala Lumpur ran counter to the bloc's 38-year-old policy of staying out of the internal affairs of its members.

It reflected growing frustration with the junta's snail-paced moves to fulfill its pledge to allow democracy and its refusal to release pro-democracy campaigner Aung San Suu Kyi despite an international outcry.

The statement did not mention Suu Kyi by name, however, referring only to detainees in general.

"We took note of the briefing by Myanmar (Prime Minister Soe Win) on the latest developments in the implementation of its road map to democracy. We encouraged Myanmar to expedite the process," the statement said. "We also call for the release of those

FREE/ A6

MEMBERS of the Philippine National Police Special Action Force catch some sleep while on full alert status at Western Police District headquarters in Manila. RYAN LIM

PNP dismisses coup rumors as 'all noise'

TROOPS LOYAL TO PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo uncovered an alleged plot by rogue soldiers to seize power over the weekend, a senior military official said yesterday. But other officials dismissed reports of a coup d'etat in the offing as mere rumors.

Fresh talk of action by some elements of the military, before Christmas or early in the New Year, began last week when allegations of cheating by Ms Arroyo in the 2004 elections were resurrected in public inquiries in Congress.

A senior general said disgruntled soldiers and police officers were plotting to take over

PNP / A6

Las Piñas revives salt-making tradition

SEN. Manuel Villar (second from left) helps prepare the salt beds during the launch of the Irasan Center in Barangay Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas City. JESS YUSON

By Jocelyn R. Uy
Metro

AN OLD DISTRICT OF LAS PIÑAS CITY celebrated the rebirth of a vanishing tradition—salt-making—with a marching band and a visit from Sen. Manuel Villar.

The Irasan (*asinan*) Center, located near the Bernabe Compound in Barangay Pulang Lupa, was formally opened yesterday.

Occupying some 3,000 square meters of the Las Piñas River, the center is small compared to the once famous salt beds of Las Piñas, whose early inhabitants depended on salt-making as a major source of livelihood.

"Las Piñas is known for salt-making. But the salt beds here are slowly disintegrating. We thought of launching the Irasan Center to preserve the salt-making tradition of the city," said Villar, who marked his 56th birthday yesterday at the center.

The center, which showcases the old-fashioned way of harvesting salt, is part

LAS PIÑAS/ A15

TELECOM WOES

Cable pilferage traced to rising copper prices

By Juan V. Sarmiento Jr., Ronnel W. Domingo and Nancy C. Carvajal

(Second of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

A COMBINATION OF RECORD copper prices, hard times and drugs is driving the frenzy of phone line theft across the country.

The price of copper soared to $4,126 a ton on Nov. 14, more than 200 percent since late 2001. So expensive is the metal that plumbers and electricians worldwide have turned to aluminum and plastic as replacement materials.

Prices of scrap copper in the country have correspondingly risen—from as low as P50 last year to as high as P170 to P220 a kilo last month (depending on quality) —providing a strong incentive for thieves to take down phone cables hanging from electric posts.

The steep rise in copper prices is largely due to high demand in China, whose hunger for the metal has drawn down global inventories to their lowest levels in more than 30 years.

With a red-hot economy, China has become the world's biggest user of copper, overtaking the United States in 2003. Last year, it accounted for 22 percent of global consumption.

CABLE/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will be cloudy with rainshowers. Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/12/13/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

2 bishops challenge Cha-cha

By Christian V. Esguerra and Christine O. Avendaño

TWO CATHOLIC BISHOPS YESTERDAY strongly opposed the plan to amend the 1987 Constitution based on the recommendations of a Malacañang-formed commission.

At the same time, about half of the respondents in Pulse Asia's latest nationwide survey said now was not the time for Charter change, while 68 percent admitted they did not know enough about the Constitution.

The 55 percent opposed to amending the Constitution at this time was broken down into those who said they may be open to the idea in the future (35 percent) and those who were not in favor of it now or at any other time (20 percent).

Thirty-six percent approved of Charter change now while eight percent were undecided.

'Very disturbing'

In Negros Occidental, in a strongly worded joint statement representing their respective flocks, Bishops Vicente Navarra of Bacolod City and Jose Advincula of San Carlos City described Cha-cha as "very disturbing."

"We strongly belie the claims of GMA's (President Macapagal-Arroyo) allies in Congress, spearheaded by JdV (Speaker Jose de Venecia) and the GMA-appointed Constitutional Commission (Con-Com) that a clear consensus had emerged in favor of Charter change through a constituent assembly," they said in the statement titled "Negrenses United Against Constituent Assembly."

The statement was sent to the Senate and the bishops were awaiting a response.

The Con-Com, formed after the "Hello Garci" scandal nearly unseated President Arroyo in July, is set to submit its recommendations to her on Thursday following consultations nationwide.

Bane of democracy

The bishops said they were not buying the argument that the country's political system was to blame for its woes.

They said the real "bane of democracy" was graft and corruption whose eradication was "ironically left out among the priority campaigns of the government."

They said amending the Constitution by convening Congress into a constituent assembly was "dubious and a sharp reminder" of the barangay assemblies used by Ferdinand Marcos to "personalize" the Constitution during his time.

"Unless public participation is accorded due importance, a truly responsive government could never happen," the statement said.

Way to go

But from Malaysia where she is attending several summits, President Arroyo said she had become even more convinced that changing the 18-year-old Constitution was the way to go in order for the country not to be left behind in a world where integration was key.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye read a statement issued by the President yesterday thanking members of the Con-Com for their dedication and perseverance" in gathering the past three months proposals on amending the Constitution.

"Our national strength and international stature in this millennium lies clearly in systematic change, and I can see this imperative as I attend the Asean summit, where a dynamic world of close regional integration alongside keen competition is rapidly shaping up," the President said.

"The Philippines must not be left behind," she added.

Politicians must change

But in the Pulse Asia survey conducted Oct. 15-27, respondents said they were against Charter change now because it was "not the solution to the country's prevailing problems" (24 percent).

Nineteen percent said that "changing the form of government is to no avail if the politicians will not change," while 17 percent considered Charter change "just a ploy of the administration to divert attention from the current political crisis that the President is facing."

Those who disapproved of Charter change tended to come from Metro Manila and classes ABC (41 percent and 48 percent, respectively). While "a big plurality" of respondents from the Visayas (37 percent) thought the Constitution should be amended now, they also accounted for one of the highest rates of indecision at 13 percent.

But of the 36 percent that approved of Charter change now, nearly a third (31 percent) said it would solve the country's political crisis. Other top reasons were "[Charter change] will help push economic development and progress in the country" at 28 percent, and "a change in the form of government is needed to reduce the politicking between the executive and legislative branches" at 24 percent.

The 68 percent of respondents without sufficient knowledge of the Charter was broken down into those who said they had little knowledge of the Constitution to begin with (52 percent) and those who said they knew virtually nothing about it (16 percent).

Against parliament

A fourth of the total number of respondents said they knew enough about the Constitution and only eight percent said they knew a great deal about it.

Six in every 10 were not in favor of shifting to a parliamentary form of government, a sentiment most pronounced in Metro Manila (67 percent), the rest of Luzon (63 percent) and Class D (62 percent).

Pulse Asia conducted face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults all over the country. The survey had an error margin of plus or minus 3 percent at the 95-percent confidence level. The Ulat ng Bayan surveys are undertaken without any party singularly commissioning the research effort.

Veep votes recount begins; sparks fly

By Armand N. Nocum

FORMER Sen. Loren Legarda with her lawyers Rufus Rodriguez and Sixto Brillantes watch recounting of votes at the Court of Appeals in Manila. At left, representing Vice President Noli de Castro, is lawyer Romulo Makalintal.

ERIK ARAZAS

THE REVIEW BY THE PRESIDENTIAL Electoral Tribunal of election returns that had been questioned by defeated vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda got underway yesterday, and within hours of the opening of the first ballot boxes the camps of both protagonists began a new barrage in their year-old war of words.

"I feel vindicated," Legarda told reporters hours after the PET's revision teams started examining the election returns. "The fraud was finally shown in all the election returns so far (examined)."

Vice President Noli de Castro's lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, said there was no discrepancy and it was too early for Legarda to make such conclusion. Besides, he said, the preliminary results showed De Castro had won the election fair and square.

In an interview, Legarda claimed that the opening of the ballot boxes exposed discrepancies between copies of the election returns that were canvassed by Congress and her own copies of the same returns from the Commission on Election. She said these confirmed there was fraud in the May 2004 elections.

According to Legarda, the returns in her possession, "which are Comelec-certified true copy," did not tally with "those which are inside the ballot boxes" from Congress. "These are supposed to be duplicates with the same serial number. The results were altered."

Legarda cited, for example, the results in Barangay Bantogawato, Balindong town of Lanao Del Sur, where the Comelec copy of the election return, or ER, indicated 38 votes for De Castro and 71 for her. But in the Congress copy, Legarda said her votes became 30 and De Castro's 75.

She said similar discrepancies were seen in the ERs of eight other barangays of Balindong.

But Macalintal shot down Legarda's claims, adding that she should not be comparing the ERs in Congress with those in the Comelec.

"The evidence she (Legarda) is presenting is self-serving because in her election protest, she admitted that the correct results of the election were the ones reflected in the Congress copy of the election returns," Macalintal said.

"We are happy because the lead of Noli de Castro (over Legarda) is now established," Macalintal said. But, he added, it was too early to "jump into conclusions" because the whole process could take about a year.

"It was just the initial findings of the revision teams. But it is the PET that would actually hand down the official findings. So why don't we wait until PET makes its ruling?" Macalintal said.

The PET, which is actually the Supreme Court, has formed 25 revision teams to look at the contested ballots coming from the provinces of Cebu, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Pampanga.

So far, only the ballots from 7,764 precincts of Cebu are in the hands of the PET.

Unlike the counting of ballots at the precinct level which was conducted in public, the recounting of the ballots and revision of votes by the PET is being carried out away from public view. Apart from the 25 revision teams of the PET, the only other people allowed to witness the procedure are representatives of Legarda and De Castro.

Except for a brief photo opportunity, members of the press were kept out of the proceedings, which the PET has ordered be conducted daily except Saturdays and Sundays.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, at least 50 ballot boxes were opened. Legarda has contested a total of 125,000 ballot boxes. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

DFA looking into Internet report of rape of Pinay by foreign envoy

By Nikko Dizon

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN Affairs said yesterday it had asked the Philippine Embassy in Israel to look into media reports on the Internet that a Filipino nanny in that country had accused a diplomat of raping her.

"The DFA has forwarded the (news) articles to Ambassador [to Israel] Antonio Modena. All we have is (media) reports and the woman in the articles is anonymous," DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said in a phone interview.

Asuque said Modena would also be given an opportunity to answer the victim's allegation that instead of helping her, the embassy advised her to recant her statement.

News reports on various websites identified the diplomat as Sisa Ncwana, South Africa's ambassador to the Palestine National Authority.

Among the sites that published the news reports were the South African Broadcasting Corp. (sabcnews.co.za), allafrica.com and The Star (thestar.co.za)

According to the reports, Ncwana was recalled by Pretoria after news of the alleged rape was posted.

The Filipino woman, who now works as a nanny for an Israeli family, was not identified.

The woman claimed the incident took place earlier this year in Ncwana's official residence when she worked for him as his housemaid.

Joma fears abduction by US agents

JOSE MARIA SISON, THE EXiled founder of the Philippines' decades-old communist insurgency, said yesterday he fears he could be abducted by the United States in its fight against international terrorism.

The US State Department and western allies have designated the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which Sison established in 1968, and its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA), as "foreign terrorist organizations."

Sison, who lives in exile in the Netherlands where he is seeking political asylum, accused President Macapagal-Arroyo's government of implicating the CPP-NPA in terrorism to justify his arrest by Washington, Manila's top military ally.

Ms Arroyo has suspended peace talks with the CPP-NPA after the rebels refused a government demand for a nationwide ceasefire. The insurgent leadership also wants Manila to get the group off the West's terrorist watchlist.

"My Philippine, European and American lawyers are looking into the possibility that the US and Arroyo governments are fabricating stories and intelligence dossiers against me in order to lay the ground for my 'rendition' by the CIA and other operatives of the US," Sison said in a statement. AFP

Erap asks permission to attend brother's wake

He also wants to spend Christmas and New Year in his San Juan home

ESTRADA

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada, detained at his Tanay rest house pending completion of his trial on plunder charges, asked the Sandiganbayan yesterday for permission to attend the wake for a brother who died Sunday, and to be allowed to spend Christmas and New Year at his home in suburban San Juan.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio posed no objection to Estrada paying his last respects to elder brother Antonio Ejercito, whose body lies in state at the Santuario de San Jose in Greenhills, San Juan, but asked the court for more time to mull the requested "Christmas furlough."

The court gave Villa-Ignacio until Wednesday to submit his comment but gave no indication when it would rule on Estrada's request to attend the vigil for his brother, who is to be buried Thursday at the San Juan Cemetery, according to Estrad's son JV Ejercito. It also asked the Philippine National Police for comment.

Antonio Estrada, 73, died early Sunday at the San Juan Medical Center. He had cancer of the colon, the family said.

"As another sibling goes, it strikes all of us how easy it is to appreciate that all concerned see, recognize and accept that their allotted time on earth becomes shorter and shorter. Here today, gone tomorrow, as it were," the deposed President's lawyer, Rene Saguisag, said in an urgent motion.

Saguisag said Estrada was seeking the Christmas furlough from Dec. 23 to Jan. 6 to prepare for his planned testimony at the trial. He said the furlough was being sought in view of the uncertainty of how the court will rule on a pending request by Estrada to be granted bail or placed under "city arrest."

"In keeping with the Filipino tradition, the prosecution panel won't oppose Estrada's motion subject to the condition that his movement would be limited to the site of the wake," Villa-Ignacio said. However, he opposed Estrada's plan to stay overnight in his Polk Street residence and to join the funeral march as it would create security problems. *Nelson Flores, Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

JUNK WTO!
打倒世貿！

A FILIPINO farmer, covered with imported vegetables, plays dead to dramatize the alleged ill-effects of the upcoming sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong during a rally in Manila Monday.

AP

700 Pinoy activists join HK march today

By Blanche S. Rivera

HONG KONG (via PLDT)—SEVEN hundred Filipino fishermen, farmers, economists and lawmakers will march with some 7,000 other protesters from all over the world when the sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) opens at Wan Chai Convention Center here today.

From Wan Chai Causeway, where there will be a fluvial parade of some 400 Southeast Asian fishermen led by the Philippines, to Victoria Park, where the protesters will converge for the big march, the world's trade leaders are bound to hear the call for better and fairer trade.

"We came here today not as potential troublemakers, but as a nonviolent group that will engage in peaceful protests to air our grievances, and no amount of delay, harassment and discrimination from the host country can deter us," leaders of Kilusang Mangingisda (Fisherfolk Movement) from the Philippines said in a press briefing yesterday.

Militant Filipino groups and technical advisers of the Philippine negotiating team to the WTO agreed no deal was better than more onerous agreements in agriculture, industries and services that have plunged poor countries into trade deficits.

Filipino legislators representing militant party-list groups like Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casiño are also here.

The Hong Kong People's Alliance, coordinator of all anti-WTO activities here, said the demonstrations this week would be the biggest international protests to be staged in this cosmopolitan territory of nearly seven million people.

"Our voice is very, very strong this time. It should be stronger than in Cancun [Mexico]," HKPA coordinator Mabel Au told the INQUIRER yesterday by phone.

The HKPA estimated 600-700 Filipinos would join the march from Victoria Park to the Wan Chai area at 2 p.m. today.

"The Filipino group is one of the big groups. It's second to the Koreans," Au said.

The Southeast Asian Fish for Justice Network (Seafish-J) has secured a permit and three boats to carry its members from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia on the two-hour fluvial parade which starts at 10 a.m.

"Up to now, we don't see any possibilities of coming up with good agreements in the WTO," said Au, when asked the chances the Hong Kong Ministerial would collapse like the Cancun meeting did in 2003.

Developing countries are demanding cuts in the government subsidies the United States and the European Union give to their farmers and fishermen. This allows the rich countries to export agricultural and industrial products at much lower prices, slowly killing the industries in the poor countries.

"The protests against the AoA (Agreement on Agriculture) are widespread. The greatest number of the world's peoples make their living in agriculture, and the WTO's moves to fully liberalize the sector has caused global outrage," said Carol Araullo, vice chair of the International League of People's Struggles and chair of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

Bird flu affects pigs, too

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

NOT EVEN PIGS WOULD BE SAFE.

The dreaded avian flu can be transmitted not only to other birds and humans but pigs as well.

Once this happens, the virus could mutate into a more dangerous strain and finally start a pandemic, rapidly transmitting an unknown virus to humans, Philippine Council for Health, Research and Development Director Jaime Montoya said yesterday.

Montoya was one of the three speakers at a forum on avian flu at United Laboratories in Mandaluyong City.

So just as humans are taking precautions when handling birds and poultry, so should hog growers also protect their pigs.

"If possible, pigs should not be allowed to get in contact with chickens or migratory birds," Montoya said.

He said pigs could be infected both by birds and humans with the virus.

But once in a host pig, "the virus could exchange genes so the final virus could have the characteristics of both."

This would result in a new virus that could be transmitted between humans and catch the world unprepared, Montoya said.

There have been several cases of the virus being transmitted from birds to humans, a few ending in death, but there have been no cases of human-to-human transmission recorded yet.

The Philippines remains bird flu-free but Montoya said "the threat is always there."

He said the best the country could do was to prepare.

The forum was attended by hundreds of medical practitioners, some through video phone patch from Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and Baguio cities.

"This is still part of our preparedness campaign. We are starting with our health workers, giving them proper and correct information," Emerging Diseases Infectious Diseases Office Program Manager Luningning Villa, one of the forum speakers, told the INQUIRER.

Health experts earlier said a bird flu pandemic was "inevitable."

"A pandemic starts when a new virus unknown to human beings is transmitted," World Health Organization Philippine Representative Jean-Marc Olive said.

To prevent this, the current bird flu problem has to be controlled, he said.

Olive said countries should closely coordinate efforts to wipe out the disease and avoid hiding cases, especially if human-to-human transmission breaks out.

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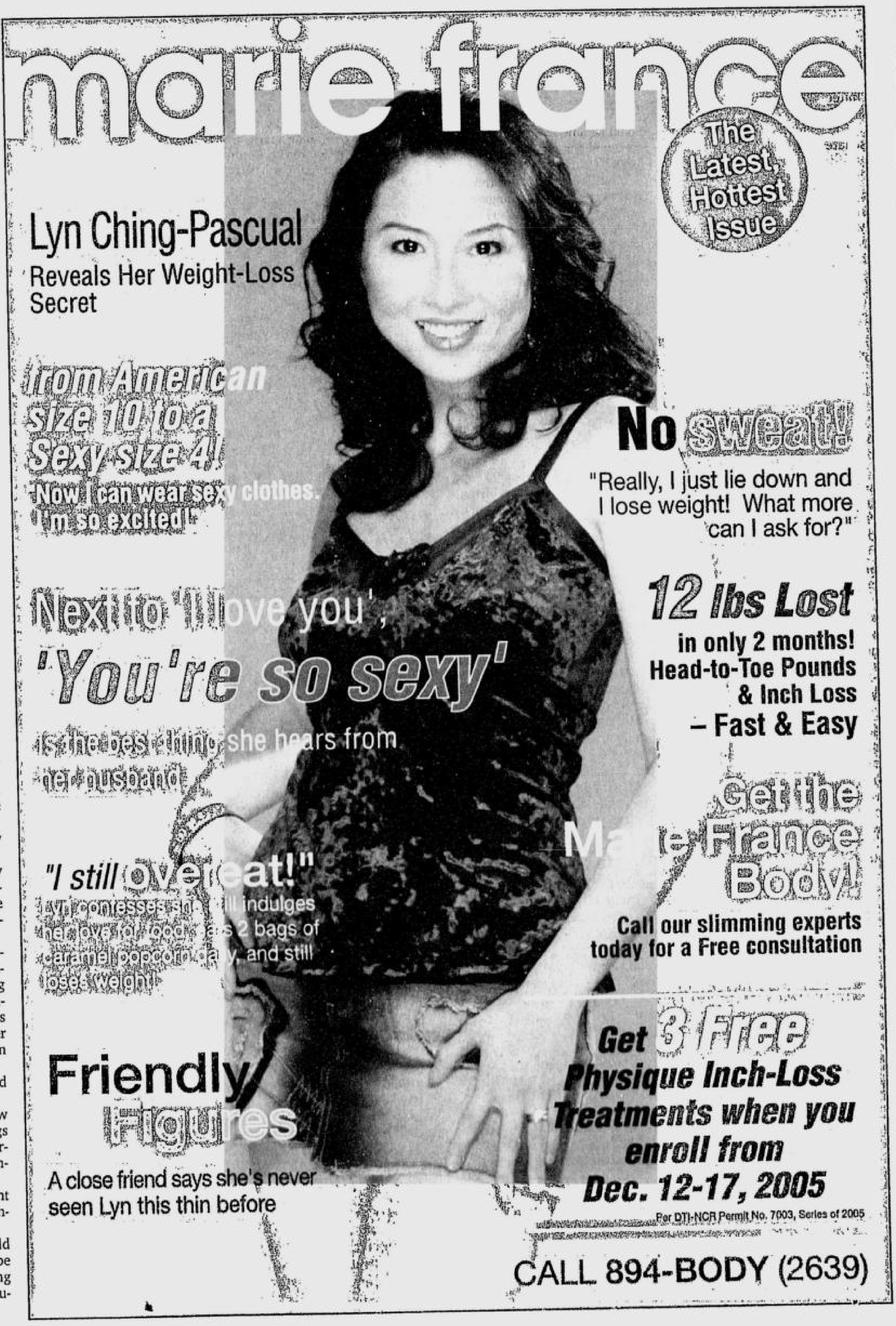
marie france

The Latest, Hottest Issue

Lyn Ching-Pascual
Reveals Her Weight-Loss Secret

from American size 10 to a Sexy size 4!
Now I can wear sexy clothes. I'm so excited!

Next to 'I love you',
'You're so sexy'
is the best thing she hears from her husband

"I still overeat!"
Lyn confesses she still indulges her love for food, eats 2 bags of caramel popcorn daily, and still loses weight!

Friendly Figures
A close friend says she's never seen Lyn this thin before

No sweat!
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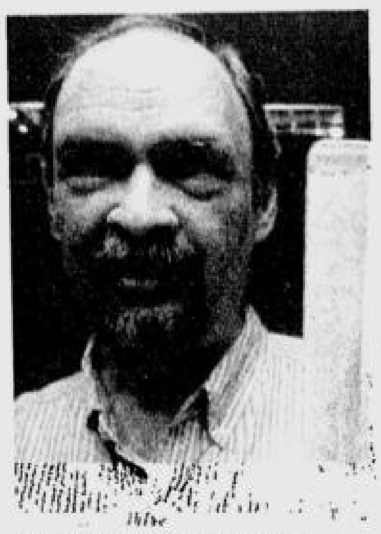
It's Garci's voice on tape, says sound expert

By Philip C. Tubeza



RECORDING engineer Jim Sarthou discloses his findings on the "Hello Garci" tape in a press conference. JOAN BONDOC

IT'S FORMER ELECTION COMmissioner Virgilio Garcillano's voice on the "Hello Garci" tapes, says a senior audio engineer, whom the administration had tried to enlist to prove that the recordings had been spliced.

Jim Sarthou yesterday said he came to this conclusion after comparing the tapes with Garcillano's recorded voice after he came out of hiding.

He added that the version of the tapes that Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye claimed to be the "original" in a press conference on June 6 was the one that was "spliced" or edited.

"I have 27 years of experience to say that the voices I heard on the 'Hello Garci' tapes are definitely those of (President Macapagal-Arroyo) speaking with a certain person that now I recognize as ... Garcillano," Sarthou said in a press conference with opposition lawmakers at the House of Representatives.

Sarthou said he first heard Garcillano's voice on the tapes but he still had no recording to compare it to. That changed after Garcillano appeared in Congress.

"When I first heard his voice, it was the one on tape, but I didn't know who Garcillano was except that he was supposed to be a Comelec official. But now I see his face and I hear his voice, I recognize his voice, which I know very, very well already after hearing these tapes over and over and over," he said.

Sarthou's findings came as a surprise since Environment Secretary Michael Defensor had tried to present him in a press conference on Aug. 12 to prove that the tapes were fake.

Sarthou said he refused to participate in that press conference since he was told that it was only going to be a meeting "to form a group of Filipino sound experts to objectively analyze" the tapes. "At that time, I was not prepared to give any analysis," he said.

Sarthou said that although Defensor's plan to form a group of Filipino sound experts to analyze the tapes did not push through, he continued analyzing the tapes as "a hobby."

He claimed that Defensor even gave his "blessing" for Sarthou to continue his work.

But the secretary was singing a different tune yesterday.

"Regrettably, Congress is being taken for a ride by Mr. Jim Sarthou who is neither an expert witness nor an accredited specialist in the field of voice identification," Defensor said in a statement.

"Congress should also put caution as any pretender can distort and deform legislation in the guise of being experts in the field. Jim's dangerous proposition could actually land him in jail," he said.

Opposition lawmakers came to Sarthou's defense and said that they might even ask the five House committees investigating the tapes to call him to testify.

"This is certainly a milestone. This is the first time a sound expert has categorically stated that the voices in the Garci tapes are those of (Garcillano and Ms Arroyo)," said Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III.

Quezon City Rep. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo said Sarthou's findings might even be used in a new impeachment complaint to be filed against the President next year.

Ex-Isafp chief's silence baffles GMA supporters

From page A1

cial Virgilio Garcillano.

DANGA PDI PHOTO

Several administration and opposition sources in the House of Representatives noted that up to now, the Armed Forces deputy chief of staff for intelligence (J-2) had not said anything to clear up the wiretapping mystery despite his having been the head of the military's chief intelligence unit.

Danga, a Navy rear admiral, was head of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) when the supposed electronic bugging occurred in 2004.

"We received some raw reports that he could have ordered the clandestine operation to conduct the wiretapping," a congressional source told the INQUIRER.

The INQUIRER called Danga half a dozen times on his cell phone to get his side but he did not answer the calls or he had turned his unit off. He also did not answer a text message to him.

A witness in the Senate inquiry into the "Hello Garci" tapes scandal last week testified the wiretapping operation was conducted by a 14-member Isafp unit.

Danga relief sought

An opposition source said that Danga did not even say anything on the wiretapping controversy during a closed-door executive session with House members at the height of the recent House inquiry into the tapes.

"He claimed that the Isafp has no wiretapping capability because it doesn't have any wiretapping equipment," said the source.

The unresolved controversy prompted Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez on Sunday to seek the relief of Danga "to avoid suspicion that he could interfere in the investigation."

As early as June 14, Golez linked Danga to what Sen. Joker Arroyo called a "breach of security and discipline" in the Armed Forces.

Command responsibility

"I believe Admiral Danga is a central character in this drama," said Golez during a House inquiry. According to Golez, it was Danga who supposedly recruited the Isafp officers now suspected of being involved in the wiretapping.

"What was his agenda?" Golez, former chair of the House committee on defense, said at the time, referring to Danga. "Who was he working for? Where was his loyalty?"

Asked yesterday why he believed Danga was a central figure in the wiretapping mess, Golez said: "Because he was Isafp chief during that period and had command responsibility."

One congressional source said Danga, who still has supervision over the Isafp, had "a lot of explaining to do."

Another House source confirmed that it was a group within the Isafp that wiretapped Garcillano's cell phone containing a Smart SIM number.

Garci's loyalty

The congressional sources could not say who ordered the Isafp to carry out the wiretapping.

The opposition believes that administration officials, unsure of Garcillano's loyalty during the 2004 elections, ordered the bugging.

Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin said the more serious issue besides the authenticity of the "Hello Garci" tapes was who wiretapped the President's phone conversations.

"The wiretappers' act constituted not only a breach of the secrecy of information and privacy of communication but the pure and simple act of treason," he said.

"For betraying their profession and the public, those military officers and superiors who ordered the wiretapping and the other political stalwarts who may have something to do with that illegal act must be identified and prosecuted," said Salapuddin.

AFP: We're doing probe

From page A1

mer Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, military officials resorted to silence.

However, the Senate last week threatened to cut the Armed Forces' intelligence budget unless the military explained its role in the wiretapping.

The "Hello Garci" scandal triggered the worst crisis in Ms Arroyo's 4-year-old presidency. In September, the President escaped an impeachment attempt in the House of Representatives based on the recordings which the opposition said was evidence she stole last year's election.

Garcillano is also under pressure to clear up the controversy when he resumes today his testimony before a joint House inquiry into the Hello Garci controversy.

He cannot go on lying

Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano of Taguig-Pateros said Garcillano should be held in contempt if he continues to insult Congress with his inconsistent testimony. "You cannot come to Congress and lie," Cayetano said.

In his first appearance last week before five House committees investigating the bugging, Garcillano evaded questions by invoking the principle of *sub judice*, or the gag rule, on a case he himself filed before the Supreme Court shortly after he resurfaced late last month from five months of hiding. The case questioned the admissibility of wiretapped material as evidence in congressional inquiries.

Kison yesterday said the ongoing internal investigation was being conducted by a team of three or four Isafp officers headed by its chief Brig. Gen. Marlu Quevedo.

Doble had returned to work, Kison confirmed, but added this did not mean he had been cleared.

Aside from Doble, the investigators would question the AFP deputy chief of staff for intelligence (J-2), Rear Adm. Tirso Danga, who was the head of Isafp when the alleged wiretapping took place.

"(Danga's) statements will be very vital. It will help in the early resolution of the case," Kison said.

Probe confined to Isafp

He could not say if the rest of Doble's teammates in Military Intelligence Group-21 and his girlfriend were also questioned by Isafp.

Kison also said the investigation would "not go further than the level of Isafp."

He said neither Garcillano nor any Malacanang officials would be questioned in the Isafp inquiry.

Asked if there were indications that Malacañang had ordered the wiretapping, Kison said: "But it is not yet established that there was wiretapping."

Kison said Isafp had not set a deadline to complete its investigation.

In Kuala Lumpur, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said it was up to the AFP to look into claims the military was behind the bugging operation.

"I'm sure the AFP hierarchy will have a way of dealing with this situation and we believe that they will act accordingly," said Bunye, who was with Ms Arroyo's delegation attending the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Cover-up?

Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday in response to previous AFP statements that it was not investigating the wiretapping and that Ms Arroyo's failure so far to order an inquiry indicated a "cover-up."

Drilon also said retired Gen. Narciso Abaya, the AFP chief of staff when the wiretapping happened, was unaware of the operation. He said he got a chance to talk to Abaya at the Mary the Queen Church in San Juan where they attended Mass yesterday.

"[He] told me when I saw him in church that he did not know of this wiretapping. That means he was bypassed. Who bypassed him? I do not know. That is a question that we must ask because this is very serious," Drilon said.

He said Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga could not escape answering the question when he faces a congressional confirmation hearing on his appointment as Armed Forces chief of staff on Wednesday.

Drilon earlier said Senga's confirmation could be derailed if he could not explain why the Commander in Chief was wiretapped and who ordered the wiretapping.

Garci object of wiretap

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said no less than the President had ordered the wiretapping of Garcillano by Isafp and that she was now preventing the military hierarchy from talking about it.

"If I were the victim of a wiretapping activity, I would be the first to say we should know who were responsible. So we can only come to a safe conclusion that the President herself had something to do with the instruction to wiretap Garcillano," Lacson said.

He said it was very clear that Garcillano, not the President, was the object of the Isafp wiretap.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on defense and security that is also investigating the wiretapping, said that while Sergeant Doble was clearly the source of the tapes, he could not have carried out the operation alone.

"Knowing that Doble is not capable of making the decision on his own, much more having the equipment to conduct that wiretapping operation, it can only be concluded that it must have been the Isafp that might have been the agency responsible for this," Biazon said. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Philip C. Tubeza and Leila B. Salaverria in Manila, and Christine O. Avendaño in Kuala Lumpur*

Cable pilferage traced to rising copper prices

From page A1

China uses copper for power generation, transmission and for wiring buildings, and manufacture of machinery and electrical appliances.

Supply chain

Feeding China's insatiable appetite for copper is a global supply chain that includes the Philippines. Imports provide more than 40 percent of China's copper consumption, which is expected to rise to 3.6 million metric tons this year.

A group representing 90 percent of recyclers in the country says all the scrap copper it collects is exported to China.

The Scrap Collectors and Recyclers Association of the Philippines (Scrap) said the volume of scrap copper it amassed in 2003 rose to 3,000 MT a month, double the 1,200 MT to 1,500 MT collected monthly in 2001.

Scrap metal is used for wiring buildings in China, according to Scrap president Aquino Dy. China is experiencing a construction boom, with hundreds of high-rises dotting the skyline of cities such as Shanghai.

Local demand

"There is no local demand for scrap copper because companies that process this metal have closed shop," Dy said. "Their business was killed off by unfavorable trade policies."

Dy said it had become cheaper to import finished copper products than to import copper rods, the raw material for the manufacture of products like automotive wiring harnesses.

The collection of scrap copper, like other recyclable materials, starts with scavengers and itinerant junk buyers with pushcarts. They sell the materials to junk shops, which buy a variety of products, like paper, carton, glass and plastic bottles, and different kinds of metals.

The junk shops sell what they collect to dealers. "Junk dealers usually focus on one kind of scrap," Dy said. "For example, scrap metal dealers are the ones who buy scrap copper."

"At the junk shops, scrap copper fetches between P170 and P220 a kilo depending on the grade of the metal," Dy said. "Copper wires are differentiated according to an international standard of classification."

Consolidators

The hoard goes to another level called consolidators like Dy, who are even more focused on what they collect. "Consolidators want to build up volume because they are the ones who deal with bulk buyers here and abroad," he said.

Used copper collected in the provinces is shipped to Manila. In Cotabato City, a junk shop owner said scrap copper was sold in Cebu, Davao City and Manila.

Junk shops in Davao City sell copper straight to buyers in Manila, said Proceso Pertubos, an electronics motor and generator trader.

Dy did not say if part of the scrap copper being shipped to China came from stolen phone cable. The PLDT Asset Protection Center said stolen phone wire "is normally sold to junk shops."

Phone company executives said a meter of phone cable, depending on the diameter, could yield 2-4 kg of copper. An employee of a junk shop in Caloocan said the copper taken from a meter-long cable wire usually weighed about a kilogram.

A junk shop operator on C-3 Road in Caloocan said thieves were making easy money from cables because the copper taken from them could be sold from P100 to P180 a kilo, depending on its quality.

"These are classified into two colors—red, which is more expensive and sold at P170 to P180, and yellow, which is slightly inferior in quality, is priced between P95 and P100," the junkyard owner, who asked not to be named, said in September.

The price of red copper rose to P190 a kilo in October, he said.

Financiers

Last year's prices were lower. Yellow copper was bought from vendors at between P50 and P60 and red copper at P100 and P120 a kilo, the junk yard owner said.

Prices of scrap copper also depend on whether the metal was burned or not.

The Everlasting junk shop in Quezon City buys scrap copper at P216 a kilo (not burned), at P208 (slightly burned) and at P198 (burned), while the GP junk shop in Mandaluyong City buys at P185 a kilo (not burned), at P180 (slightly burned) and at P175 (burned).

"Increases in the purchase price are dictated by our buyers, who sometimes serve as financiers," said the junk shop owner in Caloocan. "They just call and tell us to increase our buying price, but this does not necessarily mean that our profit will increase."

He explained that despite the rise in the buying price of scrap, his margin of profit remained constant because it covered the same amount.

The financiers, he said, usually loaned cash to operators for buying scrap. "It is also their way of ensuring that the merchandise will be sold to them."

Asked if he knew of any group responsible for the rampant stealing of wires, he said: "We just go about our business and buy whatever scrap is being sold to us."

Besides, he doesn't usually ask sellers where their wares came from or if they stole the merchandise.

He said the copper brought to his store was already rolled and no longer had rubber coating. "They take out the copper by melting it over a fire or by removing it by knife or cutter."

Mobile buyer

Phone cables stolen in certain parts of Mindanao don't go to the junk shops.

"Based on our experience, someone is paid to cut the cables and to bring them to a designated point. Somebody picks up the cables and burns them by the roadside. The copper is then loaded onto a van. So the buyer is mobile," said Eric de los Reyes, president of the Philippine Association of Private Telephone Companies.

Romimar Viray, a PLDT access engineer, believes that the thieves preying on PLDT cables in Caloocan could be people whom PLDT had contracted to do certain projects in the past.

"They are not ordinary thieves because they seem to know a lot about cable wires," he said.

Ordinary thieves, according to him, are scared to even touch the wires for fear of being electrocuted. Cables do not conduct electricity.

Duped

He said thieves, who pretend they are PLDT employees, could have duped residents and barangay officials.

"Their vehicles had the company name and logo painted on them, so those who would see them would think that it was PLDT people doing the repair," Viray said.

He said even tools, like step ladders, uniforms and sometimes identification cards pinned on their clothes were copied from PLDT employees.

He said the thieves were so brazen that sometimes the pilferage was taking place in an interval of 30 minutes. "What is most irritating, every time the cables were stolen, we immediately reestablish the connection just to be stolen again," the engineer said.

Even the "messenger and lashing" wires that hold the cable and supposedly protect it from being easily cut are also being stolen.

Apart from cable wires, cross-connect cabinets and stainless dividers where they are installed have not been spared, Viray said. "Iron manhole covers for underground cables are also stolen."

Supt. Billy Beltran, Valenzuela City police chief, said not all cable thieves were professionals. "We have arrested suspects in the past and they were ordinary people," he said.

Easy money

Some of the thieves, he said, took cables hanging loosely from poles.

The opportunity to make easy money is still the motivation for stealing, but poverty is the main reason for the spate of phone wire thefts, Beltran said.

"Maybe economic conditions have really worsened, especially this year. Now everything gets stolen, not just cables," said Innove's head of Customer Operations Support Leoncio Cantonjos.

"Anything you leave outside like batteries and even the doors of our (substations) are vulnerable," he said.

Illegal drugs

Cantonjos observed that many of the cases were drug-related. Petty criminals steal copper wires to fund their vices, often illegal drugs, he said.

"You can spot it easily, when they get caught by the police. They look really wasted," he said.

A gang in Muntinlupa City steals phone cables and sells them to a junk shop to sustain their addiction to drugs, according to a suspect in police custody.

In some places in Calabarzon, like Cavite, syndicates are involved.

Cesar Mendoza, PLDT's head of Loss Control and Management, said a gang called 13 Hudas was responsible for cable thefts in Novaliches, Quezon City. *With reports from Clarissa Batino; PDI Research, and Edwin O. Fernandez and Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

2 cops promoted for Sea Games gold

By Luige A. del Puerto

NINE POLICE ATHLETES WERE honored yesterday for bringing glory to the country in the recently concluded 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

MARTINEZ

Two of the athletes who brought home the gold were formally promoted during the flag ceremony at Camp Crame.

Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon cited the accomplishments of Senior Insp. Nelson Pacalso, who won a gold in karatedo, and PO3 Mitchel Martinez, who topped the women's boxing during the week-long Games.

"We are giving due recognition to our PNP athletes... for bringing glory to the country," police chief Director General Arturo Lomibao said in a statement.

Calderon also commended silver medalists PO2 Christopher Yabut and PO2 Renato Tunacao, athletes in pencak silat and full-contact arnis, respectively; and bronze medalists PO2 Junel Perania, PO2 Juvy Jumuad and PO1 Henbert Ortalla. Perania won in karatedo, Jumuad in pencak silat, and Ortalla in table tennis.

Also cited were SPO2 Susan Aguado of the shooting team and PO2 Rodel Valle of the table tennis team.

A total of 16 policemen joined the Sea Games—half were athletes and the other half were members of the coaching staff.

The police officials gave each other a pat on the back for successfully keeping the Sea Games peaceful. Some 12,000 policemen were deployed in five regions, including Metro Manila, during the Games.

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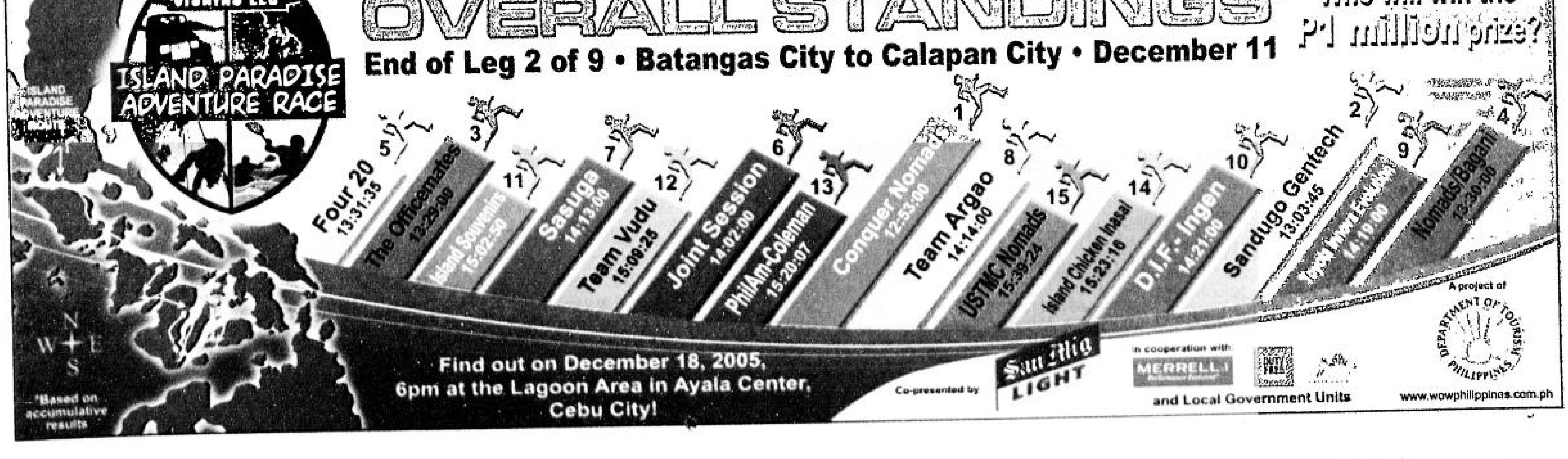
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Free detainees . . .

From page A1

placed under detention."

The statement said it welcomed Burma's invitation to Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar, as a representative of Asean, to visit the country and "learn firsthand of the progress" in the democratic process.

No date has been set for Syed Hamid's visit.

7 steps

The junta announced a seven-step road map to democracy two years ago. It is on the first step—a continuing National Convention that it says will draft a constitution. But critics have dismissed it as a sham because Suu Kyi's party is not attending the convention.

Burma has been ruled by the military since 1962. The current group of generals came to power in 1988 after a brutal suppression of a pro-democracy campaign that brought Suu Kyi into prominence.

It called elections in 1990 but refused to hand over power when Suu Kyi's party won. Since then it has jailed hundreds of dissidents. Suu Kyi herself has spent about 10 of the last 16 years in house arrest.

The junta's behavior has become an embarrassment to Asean, which admitted Burma in 1997. At the time, the group said that engaging the generals was more likely to bring about a change instead of isolating them with sanctions, as the United States and Europe have done.

"We noted the increased interest of the international community on developments in Myanmar," the chairman's statement said.

Although mild on the face of it—partly because Burma was necessarily a party to the statement as a member of Asean—the statement's call for expedited reform was a big step forward for Asean, which has always trodden softly over sensitivities of its 10 member countries.

A planned visit by an Asean mission to see Suu Kyi may help secure her release from house arrest, Thai Foreign Minister Kantathi Suphamongkhon said.

"We want Aung San Suu Kyi to be free," he said after Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said he wanted to see Suu Kyi on behalf of the Asean.

The exact composition of the visit was still being discussed within Asean, Kanthathi said.

Human rights charter

"We have several different proposals: whether all foreign ministers would go, whether it would be the chairman, or the third proposal is a troika," Kantathi said, adding this last option would comprise Laos, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The Asean has approved the drafting of a constitution for the group that would aim to boost human rights in the region and could help speed democratic reforms in Burma.

Asean leaders signed a pledge to draft an Asean charter to serve as its "legal and institutional framework."

The document will promote "democracy, human rights and obligations, transparency and good governance," the Asean leaders said in a joint statement.

On another issue, Japan said it would give $135 million of aid to Southeast Asian nations to help fight the spread of the bird flu virus.

Tokyo also said it would host an international conference on the disease next month, bringing together Asian nations, donor countries and international groups.

Roughly $46.8 million of the aid will go toward helping Asian nations stockpile antiviral drugs for 500,000 people as well as testing materials and disease control clothing for 700,000 people, Japan said in a statement. *AP, Reuters*

GMA calls on Asean to ensure energy supply

By Christine O. Avendaño

KUALA LUMPUR (VIA PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday asked leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to move together to ensure enough energy supply for their countries, and to step up the fight against terrorism in their backyards.

Speaking at the opening of the 11th Asean summit, Ms Arroyo also renewed her call for joint border patrols of their common seas and greater efforts to encourage Asean's dialogue partners and other regional groups to expand trade and investments in Southeast Asia.

Ms Arroyo, the only woman leader in the 11-nation regional grouping, raised four issues in her speech—Energy independence, counterterrorism, maritime security and matters involving the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East Asia Growth Area (Eaga).

In a news briefing, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo urged energy ministers in Asean to discuss measures that would enable the region to secure reliable supplies of energy so as to "support our economic activities."

She urged them to pursue investments in energy infrastructure and wider collaboration in new, renewable and alternative fuels.

Ms Arroyo asked Asean to call upon its Plus 3 dialogue partners—South Korea, Japan and China—to pursue these energy investments as well.

On counterterrorism, Ms Arroyo urged Asean to go "beyond the operational and legal realm" by pushing for broader interfaith dialogue.

"The hearts and minds of the people form the primary battleground," she said, according to a copy of her plenary statement.

Interfaith dialogues could counter the spread of radical and violent ideas and foster tolerance and understanding within and among diverse cultures and communities, she said.

Ms Arroyo called for a broader security front on counterterrorism cooperation among Asean, the United States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which comprises China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Addressing the problem of maritime security, Ms Arroyo reiterated her call for joint border patrols of the common seas in the Asean region.

There was a need to stop piracy, armed robbery, arms smuggling and human trafficking now happening in the sea lanes of the region, she said.

She said that the growth of the region and the stability of commerce were threatened by piracy and potential terrorist attacks in vulnerable sea lanes.

On the matter of the BIMP-Eaga, Ms Arroyo called for stepped-up efforts to alleviate poverty in this subregion through investments and tourism.

PNP dismisses coup rumors as 'all noise'

From page A1

key military bases in Manila and demand the resignation of the President, who left on Sunday for several summits of Southeast Asian leaders in Malaysia.

The rogue soldiers were expecting the bulk of the military to join them in withdrawing support from Ms Arroyo and handing power to a civilian-military junta, the general said, citing intelligence reports.

"We were waiting for them to strike but we're prepared to hit back harder," he told Reuters. "We can just speculate why they did not move. Perhaps they knew we were ready."

Text messages

The rumors spread through text messages over the weekend. One such message read: "From (a) responsible source. If you or any member of your family is outside, please return home as soon as possible, and be prepared for political events anytime now."

The rumors had sent intelligence officers out of their beds to check any unusual troop movements. There were none, officials said.

"They were all noise. Upon verification, we found none," Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr. told the INQUIRER.

Razon said a text message warned of a takeover of Camp Crame by the Special Action Force, an elite police unit.

"It said a SAF contingent will attack Villamor Air Base, take over Camp Crame, and then arrest the Philippine National Police (PNP) chief," Razon said, chuckling.

Sow panic

"Don't believe them. They were meant to sow panic among our populace and within the ranks of the PNP and AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)," he said.

Metro Manila's intelligence chief, Senior Supt. Felipe Rojas, also dismissed the coup messages as just rumors.

"We checked the South and North Luzon expressways (where antigovernment troops would purportedly come from). There was nothing," he told the INQUIRER.

"Whoever are spreading these rumors just want to take the fun out of Christmas. I slept late checking all these things. I just wish these people would stop doing this," he said.

There were no unauthorized troop movements in Metro Manila or at its outskirts, he maintained.

"The Armed Forces made an accounting of all their men and equipment. Nothing was missing," Rojas said on Sunday night, quoting his counterparts in the military.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff, said he received reports that an armored personnel carrier was sighted in Metro Manila and that soldiers were seen on Edsa and Ayala Avenue at around midnight Sunday.

"Let's wait for an explanation (from the police and military)," he said.

Rojas said the policemen were doing routine inspections all over Metro Manila. "Our men were there on Ayala (Avenue), conducting a checkpoint," he said. "It was an anticriminality operation. It had nothing to do with the coup rumors."

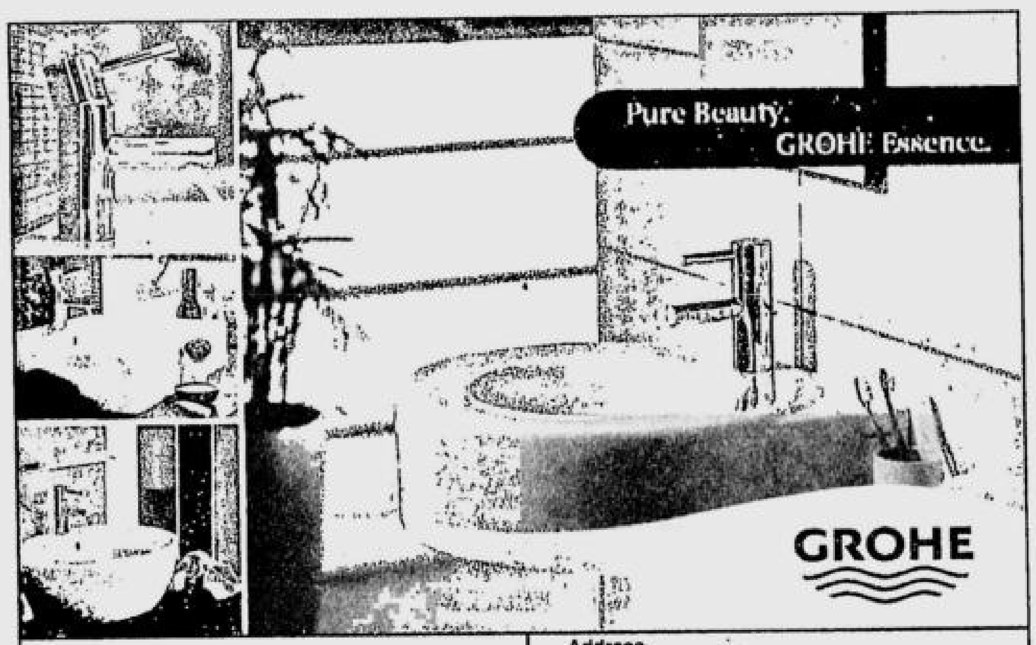
Information gathered from military sources revealed a plan to launch a coup during the weekend.

Plan aborted

But the leaders reportedly decided to abort it because it had been discovered by military higher-ups. An undetermined number of military officers have reportedly gone into hiding, according to sources.

It could not be confirmed if any officers or men had been arrested in connection with the coup plot.

"We have not received an official report regarding that incident," AFP spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison said. He, however, acknowledged the "possibility" of a coup threat. *Reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Christine O. Avendaño and Reuters*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Ex-agri official . . .

From page A1

slips in and out of the country at will.

Despite being on an immigration watch list, Bolante left Sunday night on a Cathay Pacific CX 902 flight for Hong Kong en route to the United States. It was the second time he slipped out of the country on the eve of a Senate hearing on the alleged P728-million fertilizer scam where he was summoned to testify.

Bolante also left for the United States on the eve of the Oct. 26 Senate hearing.

"He was on the watch list for monitoring. He doesn't have a hold-departure order (against him), so we couldn't stop him from leaving," Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said yesterday. "It's his constitutional right to travel."

The Senate committee on agriculture is zeroing in on Bolante, a close friend of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, since he was said to be the one behind the distribution of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani funds that were allegedly used not for fertilizer but for Ms Arroyo's presidential campaign.

The money went to more than 100 members of the House of Representatives three months before the 2004 elections.

Senate President Franklin Drilon noted that Bolante had ignored one invitation and four subpoenas since Oct. 6.

Empty chair

Four senior senators—Drilon, committee chair Ramon Magsaysay, Juan Ponce Enrile and Rodolfo Biazon—faced an empty chair behind Bolante's nameplate at yesterday's special hearing where he was to be the only resource person.

Even Bolante's lawyer, Antonio Zulueta, did not show up at the fifth hearing. Zulueta submitted a letter saying his client could not appear because he "has to leave for the United States on 11 December 2005 to attend to an urgent prior commitment."

Incensed, members of the committee want to cite Bolante in contempt, and order his arrest and detention on the Senate premises, and the cancellation of his passport.

Fernandez said placing Bolante on the watch list meant that the bureau must immediately inform Magsaysay, the one who requested the watch list order, about the former agriculture undersecretary's departure and destination.

The immigration commissioner said the bureau could only have stopped Bolante from departing for abroad if the latter was the subject of a hold-departure order or was on the watch list because of a warrant of arrest against him. If there had been an arrest warrant for the ex-government executive, immigration officials would have turned him over to the Senate.

Illegal detention

"So far, there is no warrant of arrest against [Bolante]," Fernandez said. "If we had stopped him from taking the trip, we might be accused of illegal detention."

A Bureau of Immigration statement issued last week said the watch list order was enough to prevent Bolante and the agriculture officials also on the list from leaving the country via international air and sea ports.

Aside from Bolante, Agriculture Undersecretary Belinda Gonzales and Assistant Secretary Felix Jose Montes were on the list. None of them have appeared before the committee.

"If any one of them is encountered at the airports, he will be referred to the sergeant at arms of the Senate, being the institution which requested that they be 'watch-listed,'" Fernandez said in a Dec. 8 statement.

Hold order from DOJ

But Fernandez yesterday said that if the Senate wanted to ensure that Bolante was stopped from leaving the Philippines once he returned, it could request Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to issue a hold-departure order against him.

Only the Department of Justice or the courts can issue such order, which the BI implements.

"We have accorded Mr. Bolante all the opportunities to clarify matters and to explain himself but he continues to glaringly opt to ignore us. There must be some powerful forces behind this man that makes him an extremely daring person to defy the subpoenas of the Senate," Magsaysay said.

He said Malacañang was in a position to protect Bolante. "Despite the fact that he is already a private citizen it seems that the airports are giving him the VIP treatment," the senator said.

Drilon recommended that Bolante be cited in contempt and detained on the Senate premises as was done to National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales. Drilon said the contempt and detention order would be lifted once Bolante showed up at the Senate hearing.

Recall passport

Enrile made another motion.

"I would add that once a decision of contempt is (made) against this disappearing, slippery witness, that we should request the Department of Foreign Affairs formally in writing to recall the passport of Mr. Bolante and notify the US government formally that that passport has been recalled," Enrile said.

The committee was to meet later yesterday to vote on the two motions. Magsaysay said the chances were "very high" that the motions would be approved.

A majority of six out of 11 members of the committee is needed to approve the contempt motion but only four were present at the hearing at 1 p.m.

"In law, flight is an admission of guilt. He should remember the Rotary International motto—service above self, is it the truth? ... Being a high official of the Rotary International, I am disappointed at his attitude," Drilon said of Bolante.

Bolante is the treasurer of Rotary International.

Magsaysay said no less than the President should correct the disbursement of the GMA funds, noting another P1.6-billion budget for the fertilizer program next year.

He said the people would never know how the money would be spent by the same agency, which misused the funds last year.

Agriculture officials said in an earlier hearing that they could not find the documents covering the disbursement of the P728 million.

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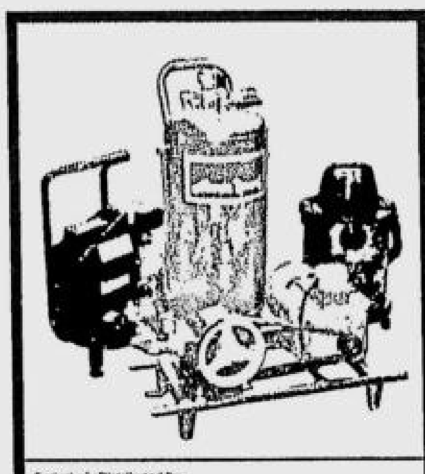

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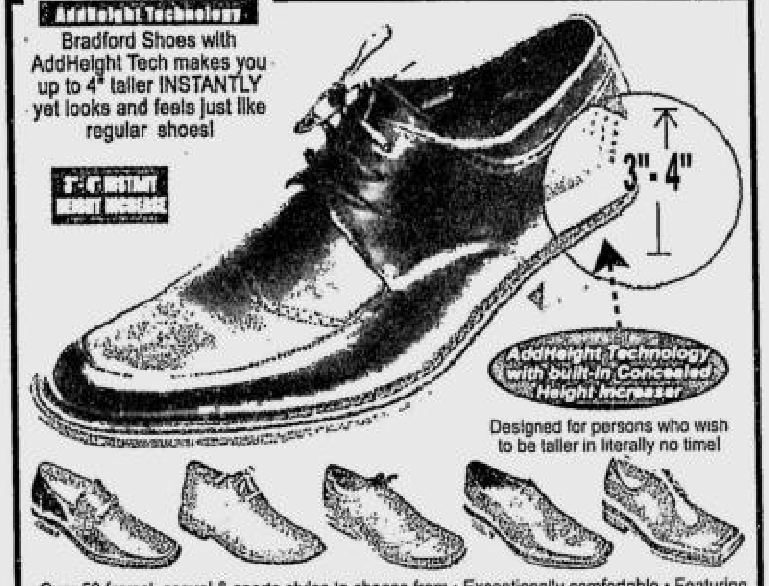
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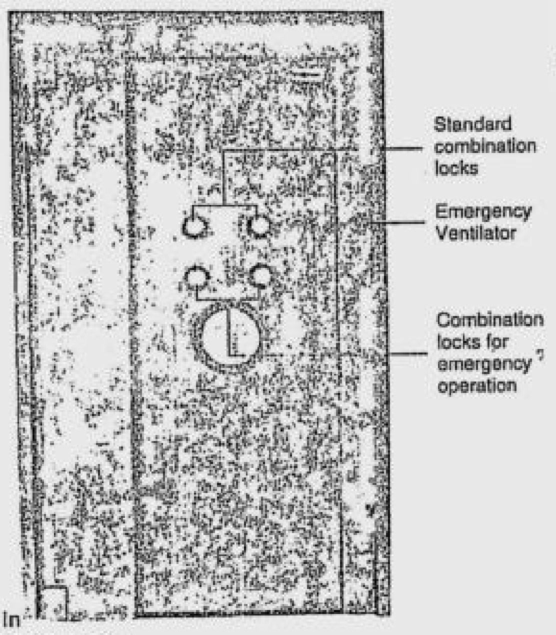
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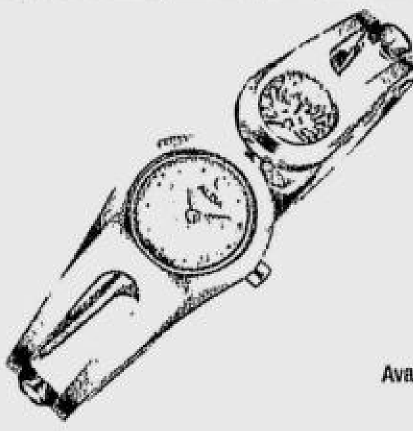

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Blasts set off massive fire near London

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, ENGLAND—A MASSIVE fire was still raging late on Sunday after explosions ripped through a key British oil depot, sending orange fireballs and thick black smoke into the sky of southern England.

Police reported that 43 people were hurt in what appeared so far to have been an accident at the Buncefield depot near the town of Hemel Hempstead, around 40 kilometers northwest of London.

Many people in the area had initially feared it might have been a terrorist attack.

"It's like it's doomsday," witness Richard Ayres told British media just after the first blasts occurred before dawn around 6 a.m., vibrating as far away as the outskirts of London.

The explosions tore parts of walls off buildings in an industrial park, smashed windows and dented doors of homes, ripped tiles off house roofs, burned trees and at least half a dozen cars over a wide area, an AFP reporter said.

The fire was likely to cause widespread traffic disruption as people try to get to work in London on Monday. The M10 highway into London was likely to remain closed and be used as a staging area for emergency vehicles.

A spokesperson for the Highways Agency said, "due to the severity of the blaze and its proximity to the motorway, the police earlier requested that the motorways be closed to ensure public safety."

Virgin Trains said it would add peak-hour services to London from the midlands city of Rugby with stops at Milton Keynes and Watford.

Fires and explosions continued hours later, producing thick black smoke that drifted southeastward, leaving dark streaks over the skyline of London, home to around seven million people.

The head of the local fire service, Roy Wilsher, said it would be well into Monday before the fire would be extinguished.

"I would expect the operation to last throughout the night and well into tomorrow," said Wilsher, Hertfordshire's chief fire officer.

He said firefighters were concentrating on putting out the smaller fires before attacking the core.

Police added that dozens of residents were evacuated, as Wilsher told reporters it might have been the largest oil depot explosion in peacetime Europe.

However an environmental expert told Sky News television the smoke posed no immediate danger to the public, as it was being pushed high into the sky by the ferocity of the fire, although he said it could become more dangerous as the fire was extinguished.

"It would mix with air and be greatly diluted before any of it came back down to the ground," ASK consultants analyst Ivan Vince said. *AFP*

Nigerians demand answers after plane crash

PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA-—Nigerians demanded answers of their country's ramshackle aviation industry Sunday after the latest in a bloody series of airline crashes killed 107 people, including 71 children from a single Abuja school.

The death toll from the tragedy grew overnight as four of the seven passengers who were pulled alive from the wreckage lying strewn alongside the runway at Port Harcourt airport succumbed to severe burns, said Police Commissioner Samuel Adetuyi.

Archbishop John Onaiyekan of Abuja said that 71 of the dead were from the Loyola Jesuit College in Abuja, students aged between 11 and 18 who were traveling home to the southeast of the country to spend Christmas with their families.

Accident investigators have found the airliner's "black box" flight data recorders and were sending them to Lagos for analysis, said a spokesperson for the Civil Aviation Authority, Sam Aduroboye.

The crash, which came just seven weeks after a similar disaster killed 117 people, sparked the fury of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the press and the victims' relatives. Many pointed to the poor safety record of Nigeria's motley crew of private airline operators.

"All Nigerian aircraft are flying coffins," wailed 24-year-old John Baligo, who came to Port Harcourt University Teaching Hospital to pick up the body of his elder brother but was sent away to find paperwork to prove his connection with the deceased.

Senior officials visiting the site of Saturday's disaster said the crowded Sosoliso Airlines DC-9 passenger jet appeared to have veered off the runway shortly after landing in heavy rain.

The plane apparently hit a drainage ditch and tore apart, Transport Minister Abiye Sekibo told reporters at the scene: "You can see that it hit this culvert. This is the reason for this accident. The man lost control because he hit this culvert."

Neither Saturday's crash nor the Oct. 22 disaster in which another airliner crashed in fields north of Lagos has been fully explained, amid mounting concern that Nigeria's aging passenger jets and shoddy airport infrastructure are no longer fit to carry travelers safely.

The latest tragedy brought the number of dead in 39 Nigerian aviation accidents since 1991 to 1,021, according to an AFP tally of press reports. Several of the crashes remain unexplained, in some cases several years after they took place. *AFP*

PEOPLE view the wreckage of a section of a Nigerian airliner Dec. 11, which crashed Saturday at Port Harcourt, Nigeria, killing 107, including dozens of schoolchildren heading home for the holidays.

AP

4 die in Japan's latest suicide pact

TOKYO—THREE MEN AND A woman were found dead from carbon monoxide poisoning in a car in Japan's latest suspected Internet suicide pact, police said Monday.

The four—a 39-year-old businessman, a 27-year-old unemployed man, a 25-year-old man and a 33-year-old woman—were found in the car in Yabu in western Hyogo prefecture on Sunday, a police spokesperson said.

The police found burned charcoal and a suicide note in the car owned by the businessman.

"Their parents and relatives told investigators that the four people didn't know one another before," the spokesperson said.

"We're looking into the case to see if they got to know one another through the Internet and decided to commit suicide," he said.

Dozens of Japanese people have killed themselves since late last year after forming pacts on Internet suicide sites to support one another as they die.

They usually seal the windows of their cars and induce carbon monoxide poisoning by lighting charcoal burners, which are rarely used in modern Japan. *AFP*

Race tensions spark Sydney beach violence

SYDNEY—RACIAL TENSION erupted into violence on a Sydney beach on Sunday when around 5,000 people, some yelling racist chants, attacked youths of a Middle Eastern background, saying they were defending their stretch of beach.

Thousands of local surfers and beachgoers gathered at Cronulla Beach after two young lifesavers were attacked last Sunday by a group of young men from Sydney's western suburbs.

Drunken youths chased and attacked Australians of Middle East appearance at the beach in Sydney's south, sending some cowering into shops and hotels for safety, as riot police and dog squads tried to stop the violence.

By Sunday night, violence had spread to a second beach, Maroubra, where men armed with baseball bats smashed cars.

Police said a man was stabbed in the back in south Sydney in what media reports said appeared to be further racial violence.

As the crowd moved along the beach and foreshore, one man on the back of a truck shouted: "No more Lebs (Lebanese)"—a chant picked up by the group around him. Others carried Australian flags and dressed in Australian sports shirts.

"This is Australia, if they don't like it they can go home," local resident Allan told reporters as he watched the violence.

Police arrested 12 people for offensive behavior and assault and blocked roads into Cronulla Beach, which was littered with broken beer bottles. *Reuters*

FAMILY members of a man neighbors said was killed by authorities grieve on the streets of Dongzhou village near Shanwei, Guangdong province, Dec 12.

AP

China arrests official over shooting at demonstration

BEIJING—A CHINESE OFFICIAL who ordered security forces to open fire on protesters last week has been arrested, state media said, ending a news blackout on the clash but denying claims that scores were killed.

The official press put the death toll from last Tuesday's riot at three, far below local reports that as many as 30 people died in what would be the worst violence by Chinese security forces since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

Security forces were maintaining a tight cordon around the tense Dongzhou village near Shanwei city in the southern province of Guangdong on Sunday.

Fearful residents said they worried about more arrests and said police were refusing to give back the bodies of those killed.

"I don't dare to tell you anything," said one. "The police are monitoring the phones in our village. They know all the calls coming in and out." *AFP*

Rights group says top Sudan leaders ordered Darfur crimes

UNITED NATIONS—SUDANESE President Omar al-Bashir and 20 other government, military and Janjaweed militia members should be investigated for ordering, condoning or carrying out atrocities in the Darfur region, a leading human rights group said.

The 85-page report by the New York-based Human Rights Watch, released on Sunday, documents through eyewitness accounts, government papers and its own investigations of their alleged role in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur since mid-2003.

"The Sudanese government at the highest levels is responsible for widespread and systematic abuses in Darfur," the report said. "The Sudanese government's systematic attacks on civilians in Darfur have been accompanied by a policy of impunity for all those responsible for the crimes."

The report was prepared for use by the International Criminal Court, which the UN Security Council assigned in March to indict individuals responsible for the abuses. Its prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, addresses the council on Tuesday but has not yet ordered any indictments.

In addition, the rights group said the UN Security Council should incorporate the list of names in its register of suspects eligible for travel and other sanctions. The council voted for the sanctions nine months ago but has taken no action.

Tens of thousands of Sudanese have been killed since a revolt in Darfur began in early 2003 by non-Arab villagers who accused the government of neglect and repression. The report charged that Khartoum in retaliation armed Arab Janjaweed militia and drafted them into police and other security forces as they looted, raped and drove two million people out of their homes.

The Khartoum government over the past two years has vigorously denied its affiliation with the Janjaweed and set up its own special courts to try suspects. But Human Rights Watch said the government has made no "genuine" effort to investigate, discipline or prosecute those responsible. *Reuters*

Farewell to red symbol of London

LONDON—THE BUS WAS LATE, BUT IT WON'T happen again.

People thronged London's streets Friday as a double-decker Routemaster bus made its last run, 40 minutes late in reaching the end of Route 159 at a bus garage in Brixton, south London.

"Full up," cried conductor Lloyd Licorish. But his words were ignored, as passengers squeezed aboard the packed bus for a last brief ride.

The red Routemasters—unique among London's bus fleet with their conductors and hop-on, hop-off open platforms—were making their last regular trips before being taken out of service.

London transport authorities say the venerable vehicle cannot accommodate disabled people and must be replaced by more user-friendly buses—either boxy modern double-deckers or articulated "bendy buses," which are longer than standard buses and have a joint in the center.

Alan Boyd brought his 1-year-old son, Alexander, for a look at the bus that had served the capital for half a century.

"I just wanted to bring my boy here; he'll never be on one," Boyd said. "It's stripping London of its culture a little bit. It's one of the last cultural emblems of London."

Along another route, down the busy Oxford Street shopping district and past the Big Ben clock tower, one man held a wreath saying "RIP Routemaster."

"It's a sad day," said Rustom Battiwalla, 37, a former bus driver who came Friday to London from the western city of Bristol. "The buses have all been overhauled, and they were OK for several more years."

A handful of Routemasters will continue on "heritage" routes aimed at tourists. *AP*

ONE OF the last Routemaster double-decker buses makes its way across London's Westminster Bridge for the last time in regular service Dec. 9. In the background are the Houses of Parliament

AP

Japan ends 2-year ban on US beef

TOKYO—JAPAN GAVE THE FINAL GO-AHEAD Monday to resume imports of some US beef after a two-year ban over mad cow disease, averting a potential trade war between the close political allies.

But it remains to be seen if the decision will bring closure to the drawn-out saga, with only a small amount of US beef set to return to the shelves in what used to be the US industry's biggest overseas market.

Japan said it would send inspectors to North America to ensure compliance with Japanese safety guidelines—that the slaughtered cattle be no more than 20 months old and risky parts of their bodies removed.

The United States rejoiced in the victory—and set its sights on other Asian countries that halted US imports in the health scare.

"Now is the time for Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and others to open their markets to US beef," US Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns said in a statement.

But even in Japan, the lifting of the ban may not appease disgruntled US farmers and politicians, with Japan expected only to import a fraction of the beef it once took in.

Consumer groups have called for labels identifying North American beef and polls show that many Japanese will not start eating it again any time soon.

A survey published by Kyodo News last week showed 75 percent of Japanese surveyed would be unwilling to eat the beef, with many saying they would keep buying the meat from Australia—the biggest beneficiary of the US beef ban.

Japanese officials insisted to a wary public that they did not succumb to political pressure.

"We were able to make progress from the scientific point of view without being affected politically," Vice Agriculture Minister Mamoru Ishihara said.

Yoshinoya, a popular fast-food chain which stopped its signature dish of seasoned beef on rice due to the ban, said it would take at least two months to buy US beef again.

"We'd like to resume beef dishes as soon as possible but even after we start it will be limited due to the partial resumption of beef imports," Yoshinoya spokesperson Eiko Tanisawa said, referring to the age restrictions on slaughtered cattle.

The United States has already sought to relax the Japanese rules by raising the age of slaughtered cattle to 30 months old—a proposal rejected by Tokyo.

"We hear through the media that the US may want to export beef 30 months or younger but the US side has accepted the conditions presented by Japan," Senior Vice Agriculture Minister Mitsuhiro Miyakoshi told reporters.

Japan barred imports of US beef in December 2003 after cases of mad cow disease, formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), were discovered in cattle in the country.

It was a devastating blow to the US farming industry as Japan was the number one overseas market for its beef, buying $1.7 billion worth in 2002. Japan had imposed a similar ban on Canadian beef in May 2003.

The United States has applied intense pressure on Japan to resume beef imports, with the issue consistently raised in visits by US envoys to Washington's closest Asian ally. *AFP*

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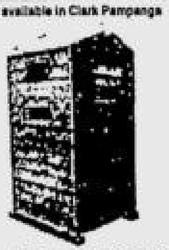
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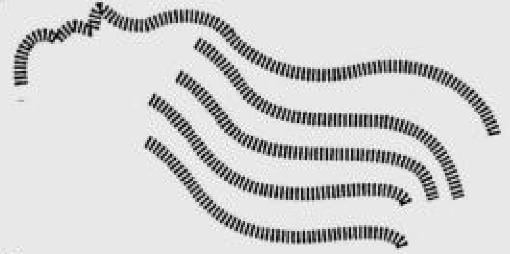

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*IMS (MIDAS) Dec. 2004 **Medical Journal of Diabetes Care Vol. 27, No. 1, Jan 2004 issue by Jarl S. Torgerson MD, PHD, et al ***John Foreyt, PH.D, Kristine Napier M.P.H., RD and Louis Aronne, M.D., F.A.C.P., The Xenical Advantage: How to use the remarkable new FDA-Approved drug to lose weight faster and keep it off Safely and Effectively (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1999), 22-23

ISSN 0116-2642 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. 21 No. 5

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OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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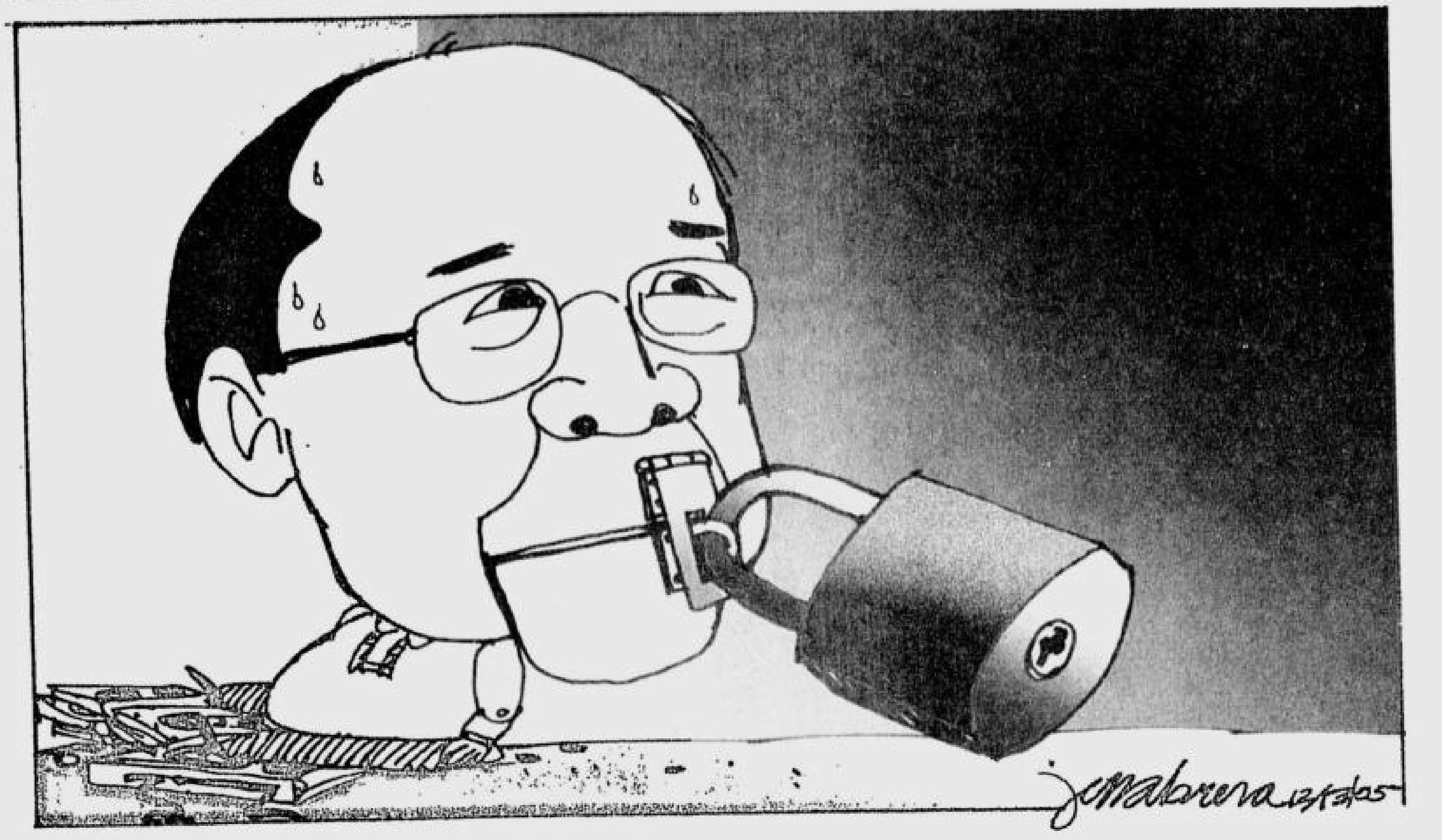

Leadership

EDITORIAL

LAST WEEK, TWO EVENTS FOCUSED ON THE issue of leadership. The first, a symposium on heads, headgear and heads of community, was held at the National Museum and it was attended by experts in various disciplines: history, anthropology, sociology, politics, the arts and media. The second was actually a tribute to Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. who is retiring on Dec. 20. Leaders of the academe and the media said Davide was a fine example of what a good leader should be.

At the National Museum symposium, the academicians argued for a social construction of leadership. For their part, the politically active speakers discussed the universal ideals of leadership. The 1987 and 1995 studies of James Kouzes and Barry Posner, authors of "The Leadership Challenge," were cited. The studies said that people look for four characteristics above all in selecting leaders: they must be honest, forward-looking, inspiring and competent. Above all, leaders must be viewed as having unimpeachable integrity.

John Maxwell, author of "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader," listed character as No. 1 among a leader's qualities. Ultimately, the question of what makes a good leader all boils down to a question of character.

At the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, where the program honoring Davide was held, leaders of the academe and the media paid tribute to him as a political leader (he was an assemblyman), an executive leader (he was chair of the Commission on Elections) and a judicial leader.

INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot said Davide was one of the best chief justices the country has had in the past 50 years. He also said Davide was "the best president the country has never had." Dr. Florangel Braid, president emeritus of AIJC, cited Davide's many contributions in the drafting of the 1987 Constitution.

Sheila S. Coronel, executive director of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, said Davide had done much to renew the people's eroded faith in the courts. And Justice Reynato Puno said that the Davide Court fully protected freedom of speech and of the press against any and all encroachments.

Davide was such a good leader, the media personalities said, that perhaps he should be urged to run for president in the next election or to run for prime minister if the parliamentary system is adopted. But Davide has said he is not interested in the presidency.

Leadership is a relevant topic today because the country is going through a crisis of leadership. Most of our leaders have not served our nation well. To the contrary, they have failed us and betrayed us; they have served their narrow personal, family, clan, economic and political interests. If our nation, which has a great wealth of talented people and natural resources, has not developed as fast as it should have, it is because of a failure of leadership.

The crisis of leadership is also due, in part, to the apathy of the people who do not demand accountability from their leaders. Of course, there are the elections, at which time people replace the leaders who, they think, have not served them well. But in between elections, what? Corrupt leaders, for instance, enjoy impunity. Has a high-ranking leader ever been sent to jail for corruption? Former President Joseph Estrada is now facing trial for plunder, but it seems that it will take forever for his case to be resolved.

In contrast, corrupt and abusive leaders of other countries have been held to account by their people and correspondingly punished. Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci were hung upside down in a gas station and their corpses were spat upon by an outraged people. Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena were shot to death by partisans. Former South Korean Presidents Roh Tae-woh and Chun Doo-hwan served time in prison until they were pardoned by President Kim Dae-jung in the name of reconciliation. Here, abusive and corrupt leaders generally enjoy impunity.

A crisis of leadership will continue to afflict our country until the people begin to know how to choose the right leaders, until the nation's leaders begin to show strength of character, practice selflessness and put the interest of the nation above everything else, and until corrupt and abusive leaders are held to account and punished for their misdeeds.

Eyelid signals

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY MICHAEL DEfensor blinked, we're told, when he slammed into a solid phalanx of Catholic bishops, local and UN officials plus NGOs. All bucked Defensor's decision to permit loggers to resume chopping in Samar's remaining rain forests, part of a Global 200 eco-region where, the World Conservation Union says, biodiversity loss is among the world's highest.

Do Defensor's eyelids also indicate if he can deliver on commitments? Sen. Jamby Madrigal is waiting for deeds to back up the talk.

Internal turf wars, cumbersome land-classification procedures, disconnect with grassroot sentiment, plus wishy-washy national policy, meanwhile, sap his department, says a Sydney University study.

Conflicting land use claims, within the 330,000-ha Samar Island National Park, indicates the DENR's failure to "strategically mainstream biodiversity concerns across resource sectors," writes Manuel P.S. Solis of the Sydney Law School. "If this situation persists, Samar's rainforest (may yet) become another part of memory."

Sydney's highest award went to Solis' analysis of conflicts in a protected area that straddles three provinces, 36 towns, one city and 25 watersheds. Published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Environmental Law, the study notes that the park overlaps 55 percent of Samar's bauxite mineral reserve.

The Mine and Geosciences Bureau and the Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau gallop in opposite directions. The MGB hawks bauxite mining in a mineral reserve valued at $21 billion. The PAWB shepherds protected areas assessed by the UN at $24.4 billion. Its output ranges from water, rattan, food, medicines and wood to carbon uptake and ecological protection.

Samar's rainforest is a primary reserve. Yet, the DENR allowed the MGB to sign mineral agreements with private companies. These open even strict protection zones to tree and land clearing and "exemplify the absurdity of current planning and land use," Solis writes. "(These) engender ambivalence ...DENR itself spawned the conflicting land use situation."

The DENR is "abjectly disconnected from the local government units, affected communities and other stakeholders, including its regional office." Overwhelming support, shown in extensive consultations, "unequivocally points to establishment of the Samar Island rainforest as a national park," the study asserts. "Thus in terms of political and social sensitivity, the DENR appears impervious and has frustratingly failed in such essential aspects of governance."

"Institutional ambivalence" is reflected in PD 442 which mandates "respect" for any valid contract or license to utilize and extract natural resources, including those over lands already classified as alienable and disposable. "Overall management and land use approach for SINP as a protected area is severely weakened," Solis argues.

The Supreme Court's landmark decision in Oposa vs Factoran holds that all licenses, particularly timber license agreements, are not absolute. They may be revoked by executive action whenever dictated by public welfare.

Most timber stands are on dominant slopes of 18 percent. These make substantial portions of the area inalienable. "Yet (the government) seems unperturbed by preferring to vacillate in resolving the Samar Island rainforest dilemma."

A cumbersome land-classification process tends to leave Samar's rainforest vulnerable. At present, the Protected Areas Law duplicates the DENR process, from survey to demarcation. "The legislative procedure only prolongs the land-classification process," Solis writes.

Congress needs to simplify protected area legislation. Solis pinpoints three sections needing action: (1) Areas in fragile ecological condition can be shielded by presidential proclamation, until Congress enacts the needed law; (2) Consider a presidential proclamation, establishing a protected area, as equivalent to a presidential certification, to speed up legislation; and (3) Recast the practice of considering bills establishing protected areas as "matters of local application."

"The integrated protected areas system is a very contentious and politically sensitive area of national policy," the Sydney study cautions. "Forests are rich sources of biodiversity. But they offer at the same time windows of commercial opportunity.

Biodiversity is "a fundamental matter that historically does not rank high on the agenda" of national leaders. Among the threatened bioregions is the Samar Island rainforest, caught in the crossfire. "Ineffective governance, lack of political will, and weak enforcement have conspired to further worsen the situation," Solis writes. Decisive action must be taken if problems are not to become irreversible in the future.

That resonates in Sigrid Undset's counsel:

"And when we give each other Christmas gifts, in His name, let us remember that He gave us the sun and the moon and the stars, and the earth with its forests and mountains and oceans and all that lives and moves on them.

"He has given us all green things and everything that blossoms and bears fruit and all that we quarrel about, and all that we have misused. And to save us from our own foolishness, from all our sins, He came down to earth and gave us Himself."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

'Pogier' than thou

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I GOT A LOT OF RIBBING FROM FRIENDS about that ad that appeared in this newspaper yesterday, courtesy of friends of Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla. For those who missed it, the ad shows a picture of me with the cap of a prelate. I am not so sure if that is a cardinal's, an archbishop's, or a bishop's hat (I must have been absent from Religion class when they taught that). In any case, it is not the usual prelate's cap, it is a cap with the INQUIRER masthead pasted on it. It carries a quote from my column in response to an earlier ad they put out: "Holier than thou? You bet I am!"

The text messages kept pouring all day last Monday, most of them gems of witticism. Someone begged me not to forget my manners and thank them for the promotion. I agree completely. My good friend, Adrian Cristobal, a fellow college dropout, was promoted only to doctor of letters by the University of the East (last Wednesday), I have been promoted to cardinal (or archbishop, or bishop)! Eat your heart out! I can't say that we both do not deserve the honor. Although maybe my alma mater would like to take a cue from UE's inspired idea?

Quite incidentally, Adrian would complain after his acceptance speech, addressed to a mid-year graduating class, how so few people are now able to appreciate wit, particularly the satirical variety, most of the kids looking blankly at him while he spoke. What can I say? How true.

Another complained that the Garci bug must have bitten me. That photograph, he said, is absolute cheating, it couldn't be less than 20 years old. Well, what can I say, too? They never asked for a new picture of me. But to set the record straight, that isn't 20 years ago, that's only a decade and a half ago (*tawad*). Socrates Villegas may rest easy in the thought that I am not the youngest person to have been made bishop in this country.

What's the story behind that photograph? Well, I can assure at least that it has little to do with vanity, of which I have little, and more with laziness, of which I have a lot. I had wanted to change that picture over the years upon the repeated importuning of my editors who kept insisting I looked better than that. But what with one thing and another, I never got around to doing it. My photographer friends—and they are legion and top-of-the-line—have been offering to take my picture, even threatening to improve on reality, but we never seem to find a common time.

If there's a vanity aspect to it, it is this: A not atypical reaction of people meeting me for the first time is them saying I look so much better than my picture. Confucius say, much better to be told you look better than picture than picture look better than you. Confucius also say, confuse the enemy. In these days, particularly when journalists are being threatened with extinction, best to heed Confucius. But don't worry, one of these days I will update my picture, the better to have a more contemporary look for when I am appointed pope.

Another asked me where my church is located so she could go to pray there. Well, I'd very much like to say that my church is the Church of Pagasa, but the church where I live might object violently to the usurpation of their territory even if its superiors do not particularly object to the usurpation of an equally sacred place beside the Pasig River. I will just say that my church is the church of pagasa (lower case everything), or the church of hope. Yes, hope, notwithstanding that some people object that I paint the country in dark hues. Well, hope doesn't spring from being blind, it springs from seeing light amid the darkness, from being courageous amid the cowardice. But let me not allow this promotion to get to my head and start preaching.

I don't recall though aspiring for the position. My ambitions, as I've said in a previous column, lie only in the direction of wearing another kind of hat, the one worn by Gandalf. Remember the innkeeper's description of Gandalf in "The Fellowship of the Rings"? "Gray beard, pointy hat." I have a gray stubble (beard is too luxurious a word for it), now I have the pointy hat. But I still long for Gandalf's more well-worn, pointy and slightly crooked hat to the more saintly one I have been crowned with lately. Particularly since I recall that Gandalf found himself opposed to Saruman, the wizard formerly known as Wise, who opted to side not with the elves and the dwarves and men but with the Dark Lord (Lady?) Sauron. Life imitates art. Strange the concepts of wise and foolish. Gandalf is right: Do not be deceived by appearances.

Still another asks my permission for his NGO to produce T-shirts of the ad this season. What can I say? I can only give them my (arch)bishopric blessings and wish them the best of luck and myself a portion of the sales. I don't know that it will make the recipients merry this Christmas, but I can imagine at least that it will make them go, "Ho, ho, ho!" I'll see if I can get the original ad from the INQUIRER, which should produce a better printout than a scan. But please be sure to send me one T-shirt. Or better still one box so I will be spared the task of buying presents this Christmas. I wouldn't mind if you keep it to only one size—large—in keeping with my new stature.

Most of the text messages just congratulate me on the promotion. What can I say? Confucius say better to be given pointy hat than lead to eat at Bagumbayan for being satirical. But I'd like to add that I am poor without having taken the vow of poverty. Maybe the INQUIRER can take the cue and give me as well a promotion in pay? Your credit is good, but this cardinal (archbishop? bishop?) needs cash. Confucius further say, better INQUIRER than Pagcor.

Holier than thou? *Pogier* than thou!

Pot sweeteners

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE PASSAGE OF THE ANTI-TERRORISM BILL has been shelved probably until the first quarter of next year, and the reason may be that focus of the House of Representatives has shifted to Charter amendments. The anti-terrorism bill has been long overdue, and the latest to press for its enactment was the "top spy" of the United States, former US Ambassador John Negroponte, a recent Manila visitor. Doubtless President Macapagal-Arroyo would be hard pressed to give the Asean Summit a reasonable explanation for the delay of this Palace-certified bill, especially since some dreaded terrorists are believed to have trained in Mindanao. It has been widely acknowledged that there is need to put in place the legal framework for the speedy prosecution of terrorists, for without this law the hands of law-enforcing agencies are tied. Sadly, however, every time the threat of terrorism seems to wane, so does Congress' interest. But terrorism can strike any time and then there would be frantic calls to enact that bill.

* * *

From sources, I gather that interest among House members has shifted from the anti-terror bill to Charter change in the light of recent developments directly affecting their political future. Two amendments the Constitutional Commission is reportedly considering are the lifting of term limits for members of Congress and the suspension of the 2007 elections, which would allow them to remain in office until 2010. These are obviously incentive enough for lawmakers to support Charter change.

But as Cebu City Rep. Antonio V. Cuenco said during his sponsorship speech late last month, we need a bill that will seek first and foremost to prevent and deter terrorism rather than just put up a "blind defense" and punish the guilty after the act has been committed. He stressed that the deadly and sophisticated war being waged by today's terrorists calls for nothing less than the use of state-of-the-art technology and "sufficient latitude in petitioning wiretapping and other ways to cover suspects." Cuenco also pointed out that his bill was whittled down the maximum period for detaining a suspect without charge from the original 30 days to 15 days in deference to human rights advocates, this has been further reduced to three days. This pales in comparison to that in other countries. In the US, for instance, terror suspects can be detained indefinitely without charge, and in fact Afghan terrorists have been detained in Guantanamo, Cuba, since the invasion of Afghanistan. In Malaysia, detention without charge is a "draconian" two years, while in Australia the maximum period is six months, and in Indonesia and Thailand, 30 days. Cuenco also stressed that his anti-terror bill is not aimed against Muslims but "against bad Muslims and bad Christians." He has said correctly that "the greatest mistake we could make would be to do nothing."

* * *

Former Sen. John Osmeña has now become a full-time gentleman farmer in Pamplona, Negros Oriental. He's planting many hectares with sugar and corn for cattle fattening and also developing subdivisions for middle-income earners in that province and in his native Cebu. He hardly comes to Manila, but last week he hosted a luncheon at the Mandarin Oriental for two prominent Cambodian visitors who came with their delegation to the SEA Games: Prince Norodom Chakrapong, son of former King Norodom Sihanouk and the royalist Funcinpec Party's inspector-general, and his son, Prince Buddhapong, who heads the Cambodian Olympic Committee. It was a most enjoyable get-together for all of us, as we reminisced about Cambodia and people and events we were familiar with. Osmeña visited us in Phnom Penh while my husband was posted there as ambassador and we crossed over to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in Vietnam by land—then a drive of almost six hours. He also joined President Ramos on his state visit to Phnom Penh.

* * *

Blessed with the same urbane wit and easy charm as his father Sihanouk and his half-brother, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the speaker of the Cambodian Parliament and a frequent Manila visitor, Chakrapong and his son were first-time visitors here. They were completely enamored of the places they visited, especially Bacolod where they watched the football matches of Cambodia. Chakrapong found Filipinos so "open-hearted and hospitable" and pledged to make up for lost time here. The Cambodian athletes bagged only a total of 32 medals, but like other Asian countries they will prepare for the series of sports events in our region, namely, the Asian Games in 2006, the SEA Games in Bangkok in 2007 and the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Chakrapong noted that Thailand has put up a fantastic state-of-the-art sports training center outside Bangkok, where its athletes are undergoing intense scientific training (perhaps to regain the championship from the Pinoys). He also noted that RP had imported athletes who were half-Filipino for the Games and they won some of those 113 RP golds. He joked that Cambodia would recruit athletes from Kenya and give them citizenship so they could join their team (Kenyan long distance runners excelled in the Athens Olympics).

* * *

* A few columns back I cited the opinion of Cebu-based writer and Times columnist Godofredo Roperos that what the SEA Games did was to spur the dormant culture of excellence in our people. The problem is that I spelled his last name as "Rivera." How could I have made that mistake considering that he is a well-known writer? My apologies.

* In a recent write-up, I gave my editor the impression that Erda Tech, the five-year technical high school founded by Fr. Pierre Tritz, has graduated about 500 students from very poor families since its inception in the early '90s. Actually its graduates number close to 700. This school year it has over 500 students and Fr. Tritz is targeting 2,000 enrollees.

Choosing our justices

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

OVER THE WEEKEND, I WAS IN BAGUIO AND Benguet for the blessing and inauguration of the Family, Women and Children's Center in Bgy. Wangal, La Trinidad, Benguet.

The Center was constructed out of funds accessed through the women's party-list Abansel Pinay and is meant to be used as a center for livelihood training, capacity building and providing health and other services for women and children, including senior citizens and survivors of violence.

Eugene Binay-an, district engineer for the DPWH in Benguet, turned over the structure to former Vice Gov. Edna Tabanda, chair of the Abansel Pinay Benguet chapter. Also present at the ceremonies were Vice Gov. Cresencio Pacalso, La Trinidad Mayor Nestor Fongwan, and Modesto Andong, representing Benguet Gov. Melchor Borromeo.

While there was much jubilation over the completion of the structure, which stands on property leased out by the provincial government, the building itself is bare, unpainted and unfurnished. Here's hoping it becomes truly functional and serves the needs of the women of Benguet and the entire Cordillera region, as this is the first such facility in the area.

While I was there to represent Abansel Pinay, I was also the resource person for a brief orientation on the provisions of RA 9262, the Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Act. A careful study of this law, which was enacted last year, would show that it is indeed a powerful tool that can be used by all advocates of women's and children's rights to advance and protect the rights of women, and punish the perpetrators of all forms of violence against women.

***

AFTER THE CEREMONIES, the women who remained at the site of the celebration held a brief but meaningful ritual of thanksgiving and celebration. Most memorable was the performance of the Atok Women's Association, with women performing a ritual dance and playing the *gangsa* or gongs and the drums, a task once exclusively the purview of men. The Atok Women's Association, we were told, won as first runner-up by a very slim margin, in the recent national search for "Outstanding Gender and Development Advocates."

Our gratitude, as well, to the Atok Vegetable Growers' Cooperative who donated the vegetables used in the lunch buffet.

Another group of women, representing the Bonglo Cactus Producers Association, sang a song of gratitude to Abansel Pinay for some livelihood assistance they received. It warmed our hearts that even such a small sum was so much appreciated. Finally, our thanks to the students of the University of the Cordillera who also performed dances for our entertainment.

***

SHOULD the public have any say in the selection process to determine the next members of the judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, and the Ombudsman?

The question has gained particular urgency these days as Chief Justice Hilario Davide prepares to retire, paving the way for his successor, most likely from the ranks of the sitting justices, and creating a vacancy in the Supreme Court. In a letter, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who sits on the Judicial and Bar Council, expressed concern about the recent decision of the JBC to scrap a step in the process of selection which involves public interviews of nominees to the various judicial bodies. "To my mind," said Pangilinan, "the decision to forego the public interviews was a step backward in the progress we had made toward greater transparency and accountability." The Constitution, said the senator, "created the JBC as an independent body whose principal mandate is to recommend appointees to the judiciary. Ultimately, it is only a truly independent and more transparent JBC that persons of proven competence, integrity, probity and independence can be appointed to the judiciary. Hence, the efforts to have more transparent JBC continue."

Pangilinan stressed that "the matter of selecting the next chief justice of the Supreme Court is not merely a matter of concern between and among the JBC, the Office of the President and the Supreme Court. It is a matter of concern of the public at large." The Constitution, he added, provides for the right of the people to information on matters of public concern, and the present JBC process "does not provide the public with any other means by which they can scrutinize for themselves the fitness of the nominees."

It was supposedly upon the request of the 12 Supreme Court justices that the JBC chose to skip the public interview phase of the selection process. Though Pangilinan said that to be fair, "the decision to scrap the interviews was preceded by a lengthy deliberation and covered many issues including the issue of the independence of the JBC."

At this point, we don't know yet the reasons behind the request of the justices that nominees to the Supreme Court not be required to go through public scrutiny through an interview. Perhaps they felt it was beneath the dignity of members or potential members of the Court to be subjected to questioning by the public. But if so, then this is disturbing indeed as the justices sit on the bench as public servants, and as such they should be accountable, at least before they are sworn in as members of the judiciary, to the public they serve.

As Pangilinan reminds: "The Filipino people's genuine and effective participation in the selection of the head of the highest court of the land, through the public interviews, should not be denied, if we are to meaningfully uphold the constitutionally enshrined principle that sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them."

More notes on Mindanao

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

EVEN IF IN THE PAPAL BULL ON HIS CANONization St. Francis Xavier is referred to as "the First Apostle of the Philippines," he did not journey deliberately to Mindanao. He was driven there by a storm. The first Catholic to make any conversions (among them the kings of Butuan and Surigao) is believed to be D. Francisco de Casto (or de Castro), a Portuguese and layman. He gave the name Antonio Galvan to the former in honor of the governor of Ternate, then under Portugal. Casto was evangelizing five years before the expedition of Villalobos (1543) even if he was not a priest.

The first religious missionaries who went to evangelize were the four Augustinians with Villalobos, but because they didn't know the language and were too preoccupied looking for provisions, they had no time for evangelization.

Several decades later, another Augustinian, Fr. Diego del Rosario, a Portuguese and resident of the convent in Goa, is believed to have disembarked in La Caldera in 1585. From there, he wrote to the Augustinian provincial in Manila for permission to do missionary work in Mindanao. For nine years he worked among the Moros and he was said to have converted several hundreds of them. He died in 1594 and is believed to be buried there, according to archival records in Manila.

Who then was the first to write in a Mindanao language? This is debatable. But Fr. Agustin Maria de Castro, O.S.A., who traveled all over the Philippines and knew the principal languages, states that he saw works predating 1613 (the date when the Augustinians finally left Mindanao for good) of an Augustinian, entitled "Arte, Vocabulario y Catecismo de Mindanao." The author's name is not mentioned.

But it was to the Jesuits that Mindanao was given for evangelization. Arriving in 1596, they are considered the first missionaries of that island. What is also accepted without doubt is that it was the Jesuits who have written the most regarding Mindanao. The earliest may be the letter to the king of Fr. Gregorio Lopez, provincial, dated 1607.

In another letter, Fr. Juan de Salazar writes from Zamboanga about events in 1638. Of interest may be the names of places, people and types of vessels: Gen. D. Pedro prepared with the Lutaos a small armada against the Joloes who had gone to Tabi-Tabi (Tawi-Tawi?). In this connection, the general requested a good *juanga* from Dapitan that was crewed by 50 natives and another vessel that was the property of the king. He also ordered five *caracoas* with four pieces of artillery and three other vessels called *pilanes*. These were well equipped with men, infantry and arms.

As they prepared to leave, word arrived from Mindanao of various treasonable acts committed by Moncay, the king of Buayen against the Spanish. General D. Pedro saw that there was danger in delaying help: if Corralat and Manaquior joined forces with Moncay, they could do a lot of damage. He decided then that the armada destined for Jolo should instead go to Mindanao. To ensure success, he added another *champan* with provisions and munitions to aid the forces, assigning command because of his military experience to Adjutant Christoval de Las Eras. Fr. Pedro Gutierrez was also sent with the armada to meet if possible with Corralat and Manaquior and convince the two not to join forces with Moncay.

In Lamitan, Father Gutierrez found Father Carrion with Corralat on their way to Zamboanga to ask for orders to negotiate peace with Manaquior, fight Moncay and ask for help with regard to other matters. Gutierrez related to Carrion what was planned and how an armada had been sent by Gen. Don Pedro. Gutierrez also spoke to Corralat who promised everything he was requested.

The troops climbed near the mountains of Piratan and Pinangayongan (200 years later, the datus Gata Lanton and Manquibla had their settlements there) where Manaquior reigned as prince of the Tagolanes, and where he was invaded by Moncay's forces who in turn were pursued and expelled by the Adjutant de las Eras.

They went up the river, retaking towns that Moncay had taken from Manaquior and had fortified. Upon hearing that the Spaniards were coming, the Moros would burn the towns, but in their hurry, they were unable to destroy them totally. The Moros joined other fortified towns up the river, impeding the passage of new forces for the Spaniards.

The Spaniards continued up river in pursuit, the troops ascending to the town of Manaquior where they were well received and stayed five days. Manaquior told the adjutant that two towns had joined with a third to do battle and were in an arm of the river below. De las Eras and Manaquior rushed to the site, only to find that the enemy had fled again and fortified themselves in another place up river.

Those who were with De las Eras tried to persuade him not to proceed because the Moros were lying in wait and the river was too narrow. The adjutant rejected their advice and continued pursuing Moncay's men for two days, until they reached the final place were the Moros had built a very good fort. Disappointingly only a few people were inside the fort; the rest had fled to the mountains. Thus, de las Eras and his troops returned to Zamboanga, leaving an expeditionary force with provisions and munitions.

(Data from W. Retana's Introduction to F. Pastel, S.J.'s "Historia de Mindanao y Jolo.")

Bitter beer

YOUNG BLOOD

Adoni S. Orolfo Jr.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

"BEER OUGHT TO TASTE HEAVENLY WHEN YOU DRINK IT with a friend," my friend and mentor Kuya Toah Gandia often tells me. But last night, my beer tasted bitter.

Yesterday, my friend and beer buddy moved to a new boarding house just a stone's throw away from our house. That night we decided to flush out with beer the dust that we might have accumulated in our lungs while cleaning up the place. We believe the foam of this beverage acts like liquid soap, scouring our esophagus down to the lungs. And I am not even talking about the pleasure we get from drinking.

It was already 11 in the evening and our bottles were getting warm as we continued to share our usual stories and jokes. It was fun but becoming a bit boring because the street seemed to have fallen asleep and even *balut* vendors had stopped passing that way. The night's serenity was only broken periodically by our baritone voices as we continued to talk.

The monotonous ticking of the clock that filled the gaps of our conversation was suddenly interrupted by a newcomer who yelled "Haahh!" Then without ceremony, he reached for the cold slices of luncheon meat we had not eaten and began eating greedily. When pieces of the luncheon meat fell on the floor, he scooped them up and put them in his mouth.

My friend took everything in with great composure, and then told the newcomer to sit down and join us. But he did not utter a word, apparently not intending to socialize with us. Instead, he reached for my bottle and took a swig from it.

I could hardly say anything in the face of such disgusting behavior. He must be really hungry and thirsty, I thought.

As he moved slowly out of the room, I could feel anger and pity rising inside me. I felt angry at his uncaring mother. An old man in a black coat had fetched his 18-year-old mother earlier that night. She would be coming home shortly before daybreak, like she usually did. How could she leave his one-year-old son unattended? Why did she bring the little angel into this world with little affection? The poor innocent child had awakened in the middle of the night and found us drinking. He and his mother lived in one room of the boarding house.

His mother is a single parent. At her very young age, she should have been going to school to earn a degree and not going out with strangers to earn a living.

I really have no right to tell her what she should do with her life because I don't even know her. But still I feel a sense of despair because I cannot do anything to help her child. All I can do is pray that his guardian angel will stick with him at all times. And the next time he catches us drinking, I will hold on to my bottle so that he will not develop a taste for beer.

That night, I was reminded by a child about the harsh realities of this world. My beer that night tasted bitter not because it was not chilled. It didn't taste heavenly because a misguided angel silently told me his bitter story.

Adoni S. Orolfo Jr., 27, is a property supervisor at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA-Calamba Campus.

Living on potatoes

Maria Andrea Lei T. Equipado

COOKING CORNED BEEF IS FAIRLY EASY. YOU OPEN THE can, pour its contents onto a pan and let it fry in its own fat.

But this is not just unappetizing; the result amounts to a small *platito* of *ulam* (platter of viand). To make this *ulam* increase and feed more people (or last for more than just a single meal), we usually add cubed potatoes.

A potato that fits in your fist is just about the right size for a can of corned beef. You peel it and slice it into cubes. You then take the cubed pieces and fry them in oil, and when they're golden brown, you add sliced onions. You continue to sauté this mixture until the onions turn pale and then you add the corned beef. You stir everything until the beef darkens and has absorbed the flavor of onions. And—voilà!—you have corned beef with potatoes.

At home, my dad cooks our corned beef with young corn and green peas to make it more enticing. Sometimes he tops it with grated cheese, and he serves all these with scrambled eggs on the side and a steaming cup of *sinangag* rice. It makes for a heavenly breakfast.

Since I was born and raised in Manila, going to Baguio for college caused a lot of stir in our family. My parents, scared to leave their one and only child—their *hija mia*—up in the mountains, gave me more pocket money than was necessary when I left.

I was overwhelmed with my new-found wealth. But being the sucker that I am for books, I blew almost all of my money in bookstores. Before I knew it, I only had P300 in my wallet and I had to stretch it out for a week. I was too ashamed to ask for more.

What was a girl like me to do? I went to Tiong San and the *palengke*. In Tiong San (SM had not opened yet), I took my favorite from the shelves: Palm Corned Beef with Chili. But it cost more than P80! I couldn't afford it.

I scanned the cans down the aisle and saw a teeny can. It was the Argentina corned beef budget. I grudgingly took three cans, and got a kilo of *sinandomeng* (goodbye *dinorado*) rice, paid for them at the counter, and left.

Then I went to the wet market. Vendors were blocking the sidewalks, but I found one who was selling potatoes for P10 a kilo. I was so happy.

When I got back to the dormitory, I decided that I ought to cook what I bought. I opened the can of beef, and looked at its contents in horror. But never mind, I had my potatoes. And this was when the magical transition took place: corned beef with potatoes became potatoes with corned beef. The princess became a pauper.

I started laughing. I, the self-confessed brat, was on my own. No one was going to cook and wash the dishes but me. No one would wash my clothes but me (or Spin City if I had money tucked away from all those bookstore expeditions). No one else would clean my room but me. No one would look after me when I got sick. No one would buy my Flixotide for asthma. I was all alone. I had to fend for myself. It was a strange feeling altogether.

Although I am in third year now, I still haven't cured myself of my "bookstore-itis," as my blockmates call it. "*Si Drea bookstore na nag-korteng tao,*" they say. I guess I'll just have to live with it. After all, I can always eat potatoes with a sprinkling of corned beef.

Maria Andrea Lei T. Equipado, 20, is majoring in Language and Literature at the University of the Philippines Baguio.

History repeats itself in Subic case

NEAL CRUZ, IN THE INQUIRER ISSUE of Nov. 14, made the observation that, during the time of President Diosdado Macapagal, officials of Malacañang and the Department of Foreign Affairs were reluctant to act on cases involving the killing of Filipinos inside US military bases. One dramatic case was the shooting of a native Baluga mistaken for a wild boar. Apparently, this sort of incident was repeated several times by US servicemen caught up in the thrill of hunting.

At that time, I was still an assistant at the DFA. I could sense the temerity of the people around the DFA and Malacañang to get at the bottom of the "wild boar" case. I could feel in my bones the iniquity of it all: a poor tribesman hunted like a wild boar, then being "paid" a measly sum as if he was a trophy; the accused being shipped out of the base in the middle of the night; and the iniquitous MBA (Military Bases Agreement) provision on jurisdiction.

I then sent a comment to a daily. The following morning, a diligent reporter by the name of Kiko de Leon of Manila Chronicle came to follow up on the case. He saw on my desk the daily with my comment titled: "A Postmortem." Then and there, De Leon knew that the accused US serviceman was already out of Philippine jurisdiction, perhaps, already sipping his vodka on a sunny California beach.

The story is repeating itself. Today, Malacañang and the DFA are reluctant to pursue the case of a Filipina who has been allegedly raped by five or six US servicemen in Subic. The driver of the van already recanted his testimony. Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, head of the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement) Commission, loudly hinted at a way out for the accused not to be held in Manila for the duration of the trial. The former ambassador to Washington D.C. when the VFA was negotiated is reportedly the lead lawyer now for the US side.

The VFA is indeed a repeat of the MBA. Only the VFA is worse. Today, the US troops can come and go—anywhere in the country, anytime. The Philippines again does not get any rent. And it could have "jurisdiction"—without custody.

—NELSON D. LAVIÑA,
ambassador (Ret.),
95 San Francisco,
corner Sta. Clara Sts.,
Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City

JBC's public interviews are people's right

IN RESPONSE TO THE CLAMOR FOR greater transparency, the Judicial and Bar Council, acting on my proposal in 2002, amended the JBC rules to allow public interviews of nominees to the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, and the Ombudsman. I reiterated the need to conduct the public interviews of the candidates for chief justice of the Supreme Court in view of the vacancy to be created by Chief Justice Hilario Davide's coming retirement. On Nov. 25, the JBC announced to the public that it would indeed conduct the public interviews, even if there were only three nominees for the next chief justice. Under Article VIII, Section 9 of the Constitution, the JBC shall submit to the President at least three nominees for every vacancy in the Supreme Court or lower courts.

The JBC, however, had a change of heart and opted to scrap the previously agreed public interviews, after receiving a letter from 12 Supreme Court justices. To be fair to the JBC, the decision to scrap the interviews was preceded by a lengthy deliberation and covered many issues including the issue of the independence of the JBC. While we disagree with the decision of the JBC, we respect it and will abide by it.

However, to my mind, the decision to forego the public interviews was a step backward in the progress we had made toward greater transparency and accountability. No less than the Constitution created the JBC as an independent body whose principal mandate is to recommend appointees to the Judiciary. Ultimately, it is only through a truly independent and a more transparent JBC that persons of proven competence, integrity, probity and independence can be appointed to the judiciary. Hence, the efforts to have a more transparent JBC continue.

Finally, the matter of selecting the next chief justice of the Supreme Court is not merely a matter of concern between and among the JBC, the Office of the President and the Supreme Court. It is a matter of concern to the public at large. Article III, Section 7 of the Constitution expressly provides for the right of the people to information on matters of public concern. Except for public interviews, the existing JBC process does not provide the public with any other means by which it can scrutinize the fitness of the nominees. The Filipino people's genuine and effective participation in the selection of the head of the highest court of the land, through the public interviews, should not be denied, if we are to meaningfully uphold the constitutionally enshrined principle that sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them.

—SEN. FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN,
majority floor leader,
Senate, 603 6/F,
Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Building, Financial Center,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

FILIPINO judokas show off their medals at the recently concluded SEA Games.

SEA Games victory not surprising

I WAS ONE OF THE MANY FILIPINOS who were expecting mediocre performance from our athletes in the Southeast Asian Games because of the state of sports in our country. At one point of the Games, the Thai prime minister accused the Philippines of cheating.

Despite my cynicism, I am wont to believe that the Philippines did not cheat in the Games. It would have been a feat to bribe all the judges and referees who came from the 11 competing countries and from various international sports bodies. Like many thinking observers, I believe the Philippine delegation's success in the SEA Games was due largely to the initiative of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo. It was he who persuaded businessmen to "sponsor" at least one Philippine team for a particular event, meaning, shoulder the costs of the team's training, including equipment and others, for the Games. Mr. Arroyo's program significantly boosted the morale of our athletes and resulted in well-trained and well-prepared teams. But could there be other factors?

Psychological research has consistently shown that teams enjoying the so-called home advantage (playing in their own country or territory) usually win six out of 10 games. That Vietnam won the overall championship in the 2003 SEA Games which they hosted, hardly came as a surprise.

What is in the home environment that generates the home advantage. In this year's SEA Games, more enthusiastic Filipinos were able to create a supportive atmosphere for Filipino athletes. The fans' cheers and applause undeniably energized our athletes. At the same time, the home advantage made team members feel a stronger sense of ascendancy. The home advantage might also have come from the athletes' familiarity with the sports venues, which were probably the same places where they practiced and trained. Moreover, compared to their rivals who flew in from other countries, our athletes did not have to suffer the additional stress that usually accompany travel or the inconvenience of adapting to a new environment.

Aside from the home advantage, the general momentum of acquiring gold medals boosts everyone's morale and confidence. As the Philippines notched up the top of the scoreboards, the subtle impetus to win more turned into a powerful desire for victory.

The SEA Games contributed to the encouragingly triumphant mood in our country, a welcome change from the gloomy political atmosphere of a few months back. It is my hope, as well as the hope of many Filipinos, that our triumph in the SEA Games is portent of better times ahead, for our athletes but most especially for our country.

—SHERILYN SIY,
sherilyn_01@yahoo.com

Power hustler

SENATE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DRILON has challenged Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez to pursue the cases involving the fertilizer scam, the Comelec computerization and Justice Secretary Hernando Perez's alleged bribery. May we add the case we filed at the Office of the Ombudsman on Nov. 24, 2005, captioned "Plunder in Power by NPC & MERALCO."

This involves the government being defrauded of billions of pesos resulting from unsold electricity and the 4.5 million Meralco customers paid for expensive electricity because of a Meralco-NPC (National Power Corp.) conspiracy against the captive customers of Meralco.

We have furnished the Ombudsman sufficient leads and documents to pursue the case. Meralco's attempt to charge to its customers P20 billion in penalties for its contract violations, which led to a spike in electricity retail rates and benefited its sister-companies must be given by the new Ombudsman the highest priority.

—GUALBERTO J. DELA LLANA, chair, Anti-Corruption Network, Lot 18, Blk. 21,
Lapu-Lapu St., New Capitol Estate I,
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Exploiting students in the name of ROTC or community service

SOME YEARS AGO, THE ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) was taken out as a required subject in college. (It is still an optional course.)

Like many of our existing institutions, our ROTC was patterned after that of a law in the United States. Its mission was to train officers for military service in times of national emergencies (e.g., war).

As far as this nation is concerned today, there are reasons to believe that the ROTC mission has become irrelevant to the times. For example, almost every other college graduate has found ROTC to be the most useless subject in his later life. And plain common sense suggests that the time spent for ROTC could be more practically and fruitfully used for other core subjects and thus enable colleges to prepare students better for their respective chosen fields of endeavor.

Recently, I chanced upon a group of college students, male and female alike, armed with brooms, bolos, spades and scythes, cleaning the sides of a national highway under the heat of the noonday sun. I heard that it was part of their ROTC or CAT (Citizens' Army Training) or other vague nomenclatures ostensibly intended to refashion the ROTC rationale from one with a military connotation to another with a community-service orientation. What a monumental violation, alack, of student dignity and rights! One recalls that after the rainy season in the good old days, the lowly (now extinct) "*camineros*" used to rid our roads regularly of unwanted growths. Can't our education department, please, learn to reinvent the ROTC course at least in relatively more conscionable and less exploitative style?

—RUDY L. CORONEL,
10 Venus Street,
Golden Country Homes,
Alangilan, Batangas City

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INQBOX

TEAM Philippines: SEA Games champion! Your message to our Filipino athletes?

Congrats u made every Filipino proud. Your heroism unites the country, maraming salamat at saludo kami sa inyo
—arnold arandia, 35, *olongapo*

Mabuhay! your feats are like a breath of fresh air through these times of lies, deceits & grand corruption. arnold Mendez, 39,
—maragondon, *cavite*

CONGRATS! U didnt only make us proud, but inspired us as well. Kahit mahirap, kaya basta andun ang puso!
—limuel abrogena, *isabela*

proud 2 be PinOy! congrats Filipino athletes! u gave us anOther reasOn to be proud.
—Leunam, 27, *olongapo city*

hooray 2 ol of u.. u made our country on top again.
thank U
—inna cuevas, 46, *makati*

for me, d phil.athletes did der best inspite of d econOmic crisis dat we are facing, jas for d sake of our country.Luv u all
—alzhen bakino, 18, *zamboanga*

maraming salamat you all made us proud!
—malou padrejuan, 45, *pasay city*

puso ng mga atletang Filipino ang kailangan ng bansa upang umunlad. May galing na totoong para sa bayan. Mabuhay kayo!
—polly dela pena, 37, *batangas*

Ur victory made our being Filipino delicious & sumthing 2b proud of again! Pls dont rest on ur laurels --go win some more!
—carlo de dupax, *baguio cty*

Iba ka PINOY!
—Marianne Faye Boado, 14, *Pikit, Cotabato*

SEA Games CHAMPIONS & ATHLETES U BRING SO MUCH PRESTIGE 2 our COUNTRY,BY D NEXY ASIANGAMES, HOPE U WIL BRING HONOR 2D COUNTRY
—francis del moral, 29, *san fabian, pangasinan*

DESPITE the CONTROVERSY, STIL WE KNOW dat WE MADE IT to d TOP, FAIR n SQUARE.. mabuhay Pinoy!
—roldan m. pejana, 33, *zamboanga city*

the FILIPINO NATION is PROUD of U. DIS JUST SHOWS dat WE are WORLD CLASS IN SPORTS. KEEP UP d GOOD WORK. EXCEL ALWAYS.
—james philip narisma, 39, *iloilo city*

YOU've JUST PROVEN THAT WE CAN MAKE IT to THE TOP, HOPE that

Ang galing ng Pinoy!!!

THIS SENDS a CLEAR MSG to CONGRESS, 4 a BIGGER BUDGET..
—roldan m. pejana, 33, *zamboanga city*

way to go team philippines. Its about time d Pinoys take d center stage at an important athletic event! **—Stephen Wee,** *Zamboanga City*

sa pagkam-peon ng atletang pinoy, naniwala pa rin akong may pag-asa pa ang pilipinas. Sana tulad sa sports.
—godofredo garbin, *gma cavite*

3 CHEERS 4 TEAM PHILIPPINES U'VE just PROVED that the PINOY ATHLETES CAN COMPETE among the BEST
—francis del moral, 29, *san fabian, pangasinan*

MABUHAY! Filipino athletes...
Congratulations.
Basta Pinoy athlete, posible!
—Manny G. Yap, 20, *Cebu*

filipino athletes "oragon kayo talaga"
—Michael, 28, *legazpi city*

Ang GALING ng Pinoy! Thank U coz u brought glory 2 our country once agen. iT makes us more proud dat we are FILIPINOS -- IBA TALAGA, EH!
—charmie dumago, 14, *cdo*

congrats 2 d phil.team. My question is did we really win d medals fair n square?
—Jerry, 39, *cebu*

yesterday SEAGAMES, PRESENT ASIAN GAMES, Future OLYMPICS, Go TEAM PHILIPPINES, AGAIN MAKE UR COUNTRY PROUD ONCE MORE.
—FRANCIS DEL MORAL, 29, *SANFABIAN PNGASINAN*

kudos to filipino athletes! u make us proud.
—alexis mapanao, 30, *makati city*

congrats to all our athletes keep up d good work!
—fernando laus, 31, *baguio city*

CONGRATULATIONS! we are very proud of you, for being strong & competitive. Basta Pinoy, posible!
paul ganaban, *bacolod*

WE SALUTE the PINOY ATHLETES 4 their STERLING PERFORMANCE, such EXCELLENCE WIL PUT the COUNTRY in GOOD IMAGE 2 the WORLD
—Francis Del Moral, 29, *SNFABIAN pangasinan*

congrats! u deserve it!
—jeofrey abalos, 19, *binmaley pangasinan*

Prove to the whole world that no cheating in the last SEA Games by duplicating your accomplishments in Doha, Qatar.
—Edgar Nicdao, *Las Piñas City*

do not rest on ur laurels, d ASIAD is yet 2 come, but most of all prepare 4 d Olympics 4 we haven't tasted
d Gold yet!
—gerry singson, *vigan city*

do it in Thailand --to make it extra sweeter, and prove its no fluke..
—roline, 53, *bacolod*

maaga ang pamasko nyo sa kapwa pinoy! all those years of waiting and toil now pays off. great job! mahusay ka, Pinoy!
—simon Ibarra, *qc*

you have made us realize the essence of being great Filipinos once more! Keep believing in ur strength.
—mamerto fernandez, 34, *mandaluyong city*

2 d athletes: all of u got 2 d end of ur rope, but U tied a knot & hang on, dats why Filipinos made its way
2 d top! :
—cherifiel antic, 21, *zamboanga city*

mabuhay! Galing ng PINOY!
—maria ilsea Salvador, *davao city*

SHOWING the PINOYS' TRUE POTENTIAL &SHOW d REST of the WORLD dat WE CAN MOVE as ONE, &GO 4 d BEST!
—francis del moral, 29, *pangasinan*

Yehey! Champion na tayo! Ang galing nyo!
Mabuhay kaung lahat!
—joel quintela, *tagum city*

TEAM Philippines: The spirit, pls pass it on to our leaders. It will help them become Champions for the Filipinos like you. :-)
—Noli, 56, *Batangas*

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Army says MILF recruiting more men

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE MILITARY YESTERday warned the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) against continued recruitment and training of new members, saying it was "preparation for war."

Southern Command chief Lt. General Edilberto Adan said the training and recruitment "are acts that are in preparation for war and must be confronted on the negotiation table or through preemptive military actions or both."

But the MILF denied the reports, saying Adan's statement might affect the peace talks.

Adan, in a press briefing yesterday morning, said the purpose of the training in "various areas in Mindanao" was to enhance the military skills of the rebel group's regular members and maintain their war preparedness.

Adan also claimed that the reports came from reliable persons inside the MILF, hinting these are deep penetration agents. "We have people inside," he said.

This year alone, the Southcom chief said, the MILF was monitored to have conducted more than 80 training of more than 4,000 people, many of whom are new recruits.

He said the alleged training were held in Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, the Lanao provinces, in Western Mindanao and Sarangani province.

The trainees underwent basic military formations and tactics, commando tactics and doctrines on basic guerrilla warfare, use and handling of firearms of various calibers, marksmanship and sniper training, explosive and the manufacture of Improvised Explosive Devices (EOD), indoctrination and suicide missions, Adan said.

"These training and recruitment are violation of certain provisions of the Tripoli Agreement ... and the agreement on the general cessation of hostilities signed last July 19, 2003," he added.

But MILF Vice Chair for Political Affairs Ghadzali Jaafar told the INQUIRER in a long distance interview that Adan was fed with false information.

"That report is not true," Jaafar said.

"We want to inform Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita that the MILF leadership is very disturbed and alarmed by the warning of General Adan that the MILF is continuously recruiting, because this is not true, and the MILF leadership demands an explanation," Jaafar said.

He said Adan's report was "against the spirit of the peace process." *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Army exec faces raps for Maguindanao demolition

DATU SANGKI, MAGUINDANAO—A ranking military official is facing rights violation charges at the provincial prosecutors office for allegedly using force against residents of a farming community here.

Prosecutor Ringcar Pinnote said the police have been directed to serve summons as a preliminary step for the possible inquest of Col. Jerry Jalandoni, chief of the Army's 604th Brigade, on charges of "abuse of authority through intimidation, trespassing and forcible eviction from and violation of domicile," filed by Maguindanaon residents of Barangay Kamasi here.

Senior Supt. Akmad Mamalinta, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said he ordered Maguindanao police director, Senior Supt. Lumala Gunting, to serve the summons to Jalandoni. Mamalinta said Gunting reported that he already served the summons at Jalandoni's command base in Kalandangan, Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat province.

Pinnote said they also want to find out what prompted Jalandoni's alleged involvement in the demolition of civilian houses and whether it was done with a valid court order, and that if any coordination was made with local and police officials.

The residents' complaint said Jalandoni and his men, on board a personnel armored carrier, two six-by-six trucks and a military jeep, arrived in Barangay Kamasi at around 10 a.m. on Nov. 23, and demolished their houses, including the one owned by 88-year-old Bai Nawila Pananggilan.

Pananggilan said she and her husband Madale were having snacks when soldiers barged into their house, held them at gunpoint and told them to leave their place, as soldiers threw out food, garments and utensils.

Pinnote said Jalandoni has yet to answer the charges, even as the INQUIRER's efforts to reach him for comment failed since last week.

Rep. Simeon Datumanong said he wants to find out if the demolition was authorized, saying Christians and Muslims peacefully co-existed in the demolished community.

Vice Mayor Datu Ali Camino said Jalandoni called him up after the demolition, telling him: "Don't look for the one who demolished the houses of the Muslims in Kamasi, for it was I, no less." *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

RAY ZAMBRANO/PDI PHOTO

BELL PARK
A platform on which are displayed some of the country's oldest church bells becomes a convenient park bench in Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Gays protest tightening of sources of funding

BAGUIO CITY—HOW TO GET funds to support gay rights advocacy projects is a problem that gays and lesbians have been facing for years.

This was raised by groups advocating gay rights during a forum at the University of the Philippines Baguio to celebrate the National Lesbian Day on Dec. 8.

The groups, which included the Lesbians for National Bonding and Democracy (Lesbond), UP Kasarian, Innabuyog-Gabriela and Can't Live in the Closet (CLIC), said there was still a strong discrimination against homosexuals in the country.

"Donor agencies have always been saying that the reason they do not support (projects) pertaining to gay and lesbian rights is that gays and lesbians do not belong to the poorest of the poor and they are not marginalized," Raymond Rovillos, a history professor and head of UP Baguio's gender studies program, said.

He said homosexual rights have yet to be accepted by mainstream society.

"These rights have come to a level of struggle. Despite the struggle, they have not yet been accepted. Until now, the discourse on gay rights continues," he said.

Julie Palaganas, a Lesbond member, said homosexual groups advocating their rights have also encountered discrimination from donor agencies.

Actress Raye Baquirin, CLIC vice president, said many funding agencies support projects specializing on basic rights, particularly on women, but not on homosexuals.

Baquirin said they support gay rights by placing these under women's projects when they propose to donor agencies.

"If we submit proposals on women's projects, we mention that part of the funds goes to advocacy work for lesbian rights," she said.

Lesbond is one of the organizations of Innabuyog-Gabriella, a Cordillera based group of more than 10 women's organizations in the region.

Palaganas said her group has survived from the support of business companies and schools in Baguio. Lesbond, the first and the longest running lesbian group in the country, will celebrate its 13th year on Dec. 15. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Floods, landslides isolate 3 Aurora towns

BALER, AURORA—STRONG MONsoon rains over Aurora since Monday have triggered landslides and caused rivers to overflow, isolating three northern towns here, reports from local officials said.

Rains loosened mud, rocks and boulders along the 12-kilometer stretch of Barangays Dianed and Dinadiawan in Dipaculao town, Dianed barangay chair Antonio Belen said.

Casiguran town Councilor Zosimo Danay Jr. said rivers in Bianuan, Dibacong and Tinib have spilled, flooding 10 villages with knee high water.

The northern road has not been passable to all types of vehicles since Friday afternoon.

A truck was buried by landslides in Sitio Dipalan in Dianed. The driver was rescued and his cargo of groceries recovered.

Belen said residents manually removed the debris along the road. Equipment of Department of Public Works and Highways have not been mobilized yet for road clearing. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Search for 6 trapped in coal mine suspended

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Energy in Central Visayas yesterday suspended the search for the six miners who were trapped inside a mine tunnel following an explosion on Saturday night in a mountain village in Dalaguete town, about 85 km from here.

Antonio Labios, regional energy director, said he did not allow anybody to enter the tunnel in Barangay Dumalan, Dumaguete until it was cleared of carbon monoxide.

The presence of toxic gases inside the tunnel was a result of the mine explosion, which was caused by methane gas, he said.

"We don't allow anybody to go inside the tunnel yet until the toxic gas is diluted," Labios said yesterday.

He, however, declined to declare the six as dead, saying "we should not lose hope" of finding them alive.

But Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Sesante said only a miracle could save the trapped workers.

Eight miners were on their way out of the 490-meter tunnel in Barangay Dumalan, a mountain village about 25 km from the town proper, when an explosion occurred at about 7 p.m. on Saturday.

The bodies of two miners were immediately retrieved by fellow miners shortly after the explosion because the fatalities were closer to the entrance of the tunnel.

Six miners, however, were still trapped. They were Francisco Ybañez, 43 and Jaime Sanchez, 42 both are from Dumalan, Dalaguete; Nelson Villasis, 39 of Negros Oriental; Manuel Lanogan, 45 of Canlawilao, Dalaguete; Antonio Jose, 37 and Gregorio Amad, 35 who are both from Ablayan, Dalaguete.

A team from the DOE in Manila and some miners conducted search and rescue operations for the six.

But Labios said he told the team to stop the operations because the presence of poisonous gases put their lives in danger.

Sesante said four miners were brought to the hospital after they felt dizzy when they tried to enter the tunnel to rescue their fellow miners.

Of the four, only one was confined at the Alcantara Memorial Hospital in Dalaguete.

Labios said he ordered the rescue team to set up of blowers and ventilation fans with enough horsepower to pump in air inside the coal mine to dissipate the poisonous gases.

Labios said they had made an improvised air dock or tube to quickly dilute the carbon monoxide inside the tunnel.

The Office of the Civil Defense (OCD), the provincial government and provincial fire department promised to send in personnel to help in the operations, he added.

Gov't backs white shrimp culture

DAGUPAN CITY—THE BUREAU OF Fisheries and Aquatic Resources on Friday launched the experimental culture of white shrimps (Penaeus vannamei), paving the way for its commercial importation and distribution in the country.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., who led the activity, said the introduction of *vannamei* (Pacific white shrimp) in the Philippines offers choices to farmers on what species to culture—the white shrimps or the black tiger prawn (Penaeus monodon or *sugpo*).

BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento said De Venecia encouraged BFAR "to make the bold move to try and experiment the culture of *vannamei* in the country."

"*Vannamei* is the hope to revive the almost dead shrimp industry and make shrimps available to ordinary people," Sarmiento said.

He said while great progress has been made in the culture of *tilapia*, seaweed and *bangus* (milkfish), the growth of the shrimp industry has remained stagnant.

Sarmiento said *vannamei* can be raised in freshwater, brackish water and seawater and can exist in ponds with *tilapia* and *bangus*.

Westly Rosario, BFAR Dagupan research center chief, said the experimental culture, which is on a commercial scale and focused on Luzon, will determine the growth performance of the white shrimp at different climatic conditions and culture densities (intensive, semi-intensive and extensive).

At least 12 farmers from different provinces in Luzon and who have 10 hectares of fishponds each, have been accredited by the BFAR to culture white shrimp.

The BFAR Dagupan center, which has been producing *vannamei* seedlings from the 1,000 brood stock it imported in October, will distribute the seedlings to the farmers.

If the experiments are successful and no diseases were noted, the BFAR will recommend the lifting of the ban on the importation of *vannamei*.

"[If the experiments fail] we will find out why or if a local virus caused the infections. It will have to be evaluated and we will try again. Nothing tried, nothing gained. [But] we are following protocol so we will not be worse off than where we were before," Sarmiento said.

The P9-billion shrimp industry experienced a boom in the 1980s when farmers found the culture of tiger prawn to be profitable.

But the industry crumbled when the shrimps were struck by a disease and farmers lost their investments. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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US firm penalized for unauthorized exploration

BAGUIO CITY—THE DEPARTment of Environment and Natural Resources has frozen the operations of an American firm after it was accused of exploring the virgin lands of Apayao without a permit.

Residents of Conner town in Apayao personally complained to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) here last week about illegal sampling operations supposedly undertaken by the Cordillera Exploration Co. Inc. (CEXI). CEXI is a sister company of the Anglo-American Inc.

They were accompanied by Joan Carling, chair of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), an indigenous rights activist group.

Alfredo Genetiano, acting MGB Cordillera director, said mineral sampling without the necessary documents is illegal.

Max Estaris, CEXI project manager, was unavailable for comment, according to the company staff.

But in his Nov. 21 letter to the MGB, Estaris said the issues raised about the alleged illegal activities were already resolved in a memorandum of agreement with the region's Ibuaya tribal elders.

He said the firm's EP application covers 9,000 hectares of land in Apayao, which were previously explored by Newmont Philippines Inc. and which CEXI now "wants to acquire."

Anglo American Platinum Corp. and CEXI, Greenwater Mining Corp., Coohbalah Mining Corp., Wolfland Resources, and Copper Fields Mining Corp. have applied for exploration permits for 63,158 hectares of land in Apayao.

Neoman de la Cruz, MGB Cordillera director, surveyed Apayao when its officials asked the government to determine the mineral value of lands there. To reach Apayao, the engineers traveled for 12 hours.

Leilene Carantes-Gallardo, Cordillera director of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), said the complaints against CEXI had been attached to an NCIP endorsement.

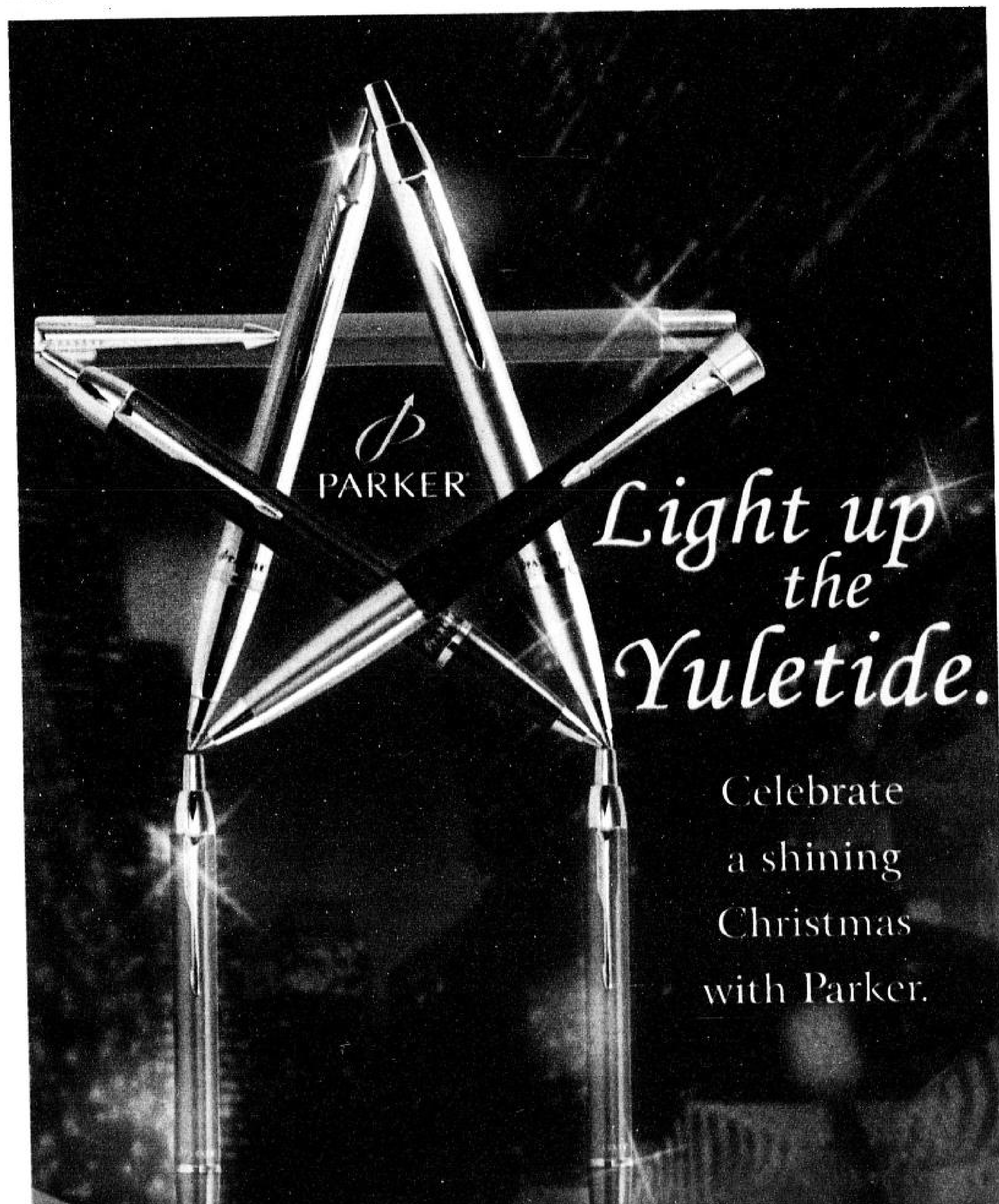
The commission will consider the complaints when it determines whether the Anglo-American subsidiary is entitled to a certificate of free and prior informed consent (FPIC), which is a prerequisite before MGB issues an exploration permit.

Gallardo said CEXI was penalized by the community for extracting mineral samples without a permit.

CEXI has applied for an exploration permit for Barangays Puguin, Karikitan, Kalafug, and Upis in Conner as well as villages in Balbalan town in Kalinga. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

MOVING COLORS RAY ZAMBRANO/PDI PHOTO

Decorated jeeps are on display at the Dagupan City plaza awaiting the results of a contest for the best dressed jeep which is part of the city's fiesta celebration.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Punongbayan given posthumous award

CITY OF SAN FERnando—The Pampanga government gave the outstanding honorary Kapampangan award to the late Dr. Raymundo Punongbayan at the close of the province's 434th founding anniversary celebration on Sunday.

PUNONGBAYAN

Punongbayan, former chief of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology who died in a helicopter crash in April this year, was the first recipient of that award, the newest inclusion in the 26-year-old Most Outstanding Kapampangan Awards (Moka), said provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas, this year's Moka chair.

The honorary award is given to non-Kapampangans who have "served and contributed to the welfare and reputation of the Kapampangan people and race."

Punongbayan, who was born in nearby Bulacan, headed Phivolcs from 1983 to 2002 and strengthened the agency's research and monitoring arm and international linkages.

The nine-member pre-selection committee and the five-member panel of judges chose him for helping save lives and property "through the timely and correct predictions and warnings of Phivolcs during the [1991 Mt. Pinatubo] eruptions and lahar flows."

The eruption, according to local officials, was the worst disaster that hit Pampanga in recent decades.

The awards organizers said Punongbayan, as Phivolcs director, also made volcanic and earthquake hazards understandable to the public by talking in simple, non-technical language.

Punongbayan, 67, died in a helicopter crash on Mt. Namal in Nueva Ecija as he and four former colleagues at Phivolcs, flew to Aurora to complete a hazard mapping activity there on April 28 this year. He was governor of the Philippine National Red Cross at the time of his death.

This year's Moka awardees are Rosita Pinpin-Feliciano for parenthood, Michael Quilala for youth service, Lamberto Garcia for social service, Dr. Eusebio Dizon for science and technology, Dr. Wilfredo Ocampo for education, Vicente Aquino for law enforcement, Roland Quiambao for culture and the arts, Caesar Lacson for mass media, and Associate Justice Amelita Tolentino for judicial service. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Cotabato airport funds ordered released by GMA

COTABATO CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to provide funds to the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) for the immediate rehabilitation of the Cotabato Airport in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

In a statement, Robert Castañares, assistant transportation secretary, said the President directed them to fast track the rehabilitation and repair of the airport's dilapidated runway following reports over Philippine Airlines' plan to stop operations at the airport.

Castañares said the scope of work has been prepared and that the bidding for the repair will be done very soon.

The DOTC seeks to implement the rehabilitation project starting this month or in early January next year.

He shrugged off reports that the repair work was put on hold because of the Mindanao Economic Development Council's (Medco) objections.

Earlier, Air Transportation Office Cotabato Manager Jun Masanta, who recommended the repair and rehabilitation of the runway, said the project has been put on hold due to technical problems.

The Medco wrote the DOTC saying any move to repair the Cotabato Airport should have its approval.

Capt. Reuben Stilberg, PAL vice president for safety concerns, said the runway poses danger to aircraft as pebbles scattered all over it may enter plane engines and cause these to overheat and burst into flames. *Jeffrey Maitem, PDI M. Bureau*

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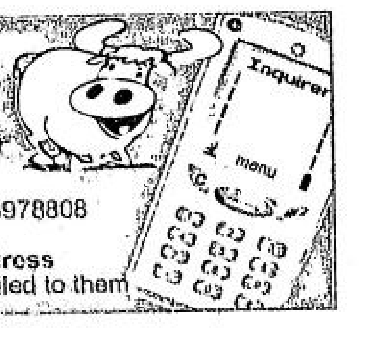


MMDA ban on Metro road diggings starts

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE BAN IS OFFICIALLY ON.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday began implementing a 26-day moratorium on road diggings to ease traffic which is expected to build up with the onset of the holiday season.

"It would apply to all roads in Metro Manila in general. The only exception are emergencies that have to be fixed immediately, for instance broken water pipes. That could not wait until after Christmas," said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center (TOC) executive director.

Copies of the memo announcing the start of the moratorium have already been sent to the Department of Public Works and Highways and its engineering districts, local engineering offices, and private utility firms, the MMDA said.

"As much as possible, we have advised them to stop all road activity, and their work sites should all be cleared," said Kirby Andrew Lipana, head of the TOC road excavations monitoring unit.

Vergel de Dios said unfinished excavations should be filled up with sand and then covered, to prevent accidents.

Those caught violating the ban face a fine ranging from P1,000 to P20,000 or a prison term of one to two months, or both, depending on the gravity of the violation.

The ban will remain in force until Jan. 7 next year.

Lipana said those applying for exemption from the ban should get the approval of MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

"They should write a letter to the chairman, and he will be the one to order us to issue a working permit or clearance. We also would inspect the [worksite] to determine if the conditions really warrant an exemption from the ban," he said.

Antipolo to hike tricycle fare

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BEGINNING NEXT YEAR, TRICYCLE riders in Antipolo will probably have to shell out more money.

The City Council is set to approve a draft ordinance increasing the basic tricycle fare from P5.50 to P7 for the first kilometer and P1.50 for each succeeding kilometer.

The proposed increase is in consideration of "the series of increases in the prices of gasoline, spare parts and other petroleum products in recent months."

Some residents are, understandably, unhappy.

"We are receiving complaints against the proposed increase," city councilor and public utilities committee chair Alexander Marquez told the INQUIRER.

But he pointed out that nearby towns had already hiked tricycle fares, and only Antipolo was still implementing the old rates.

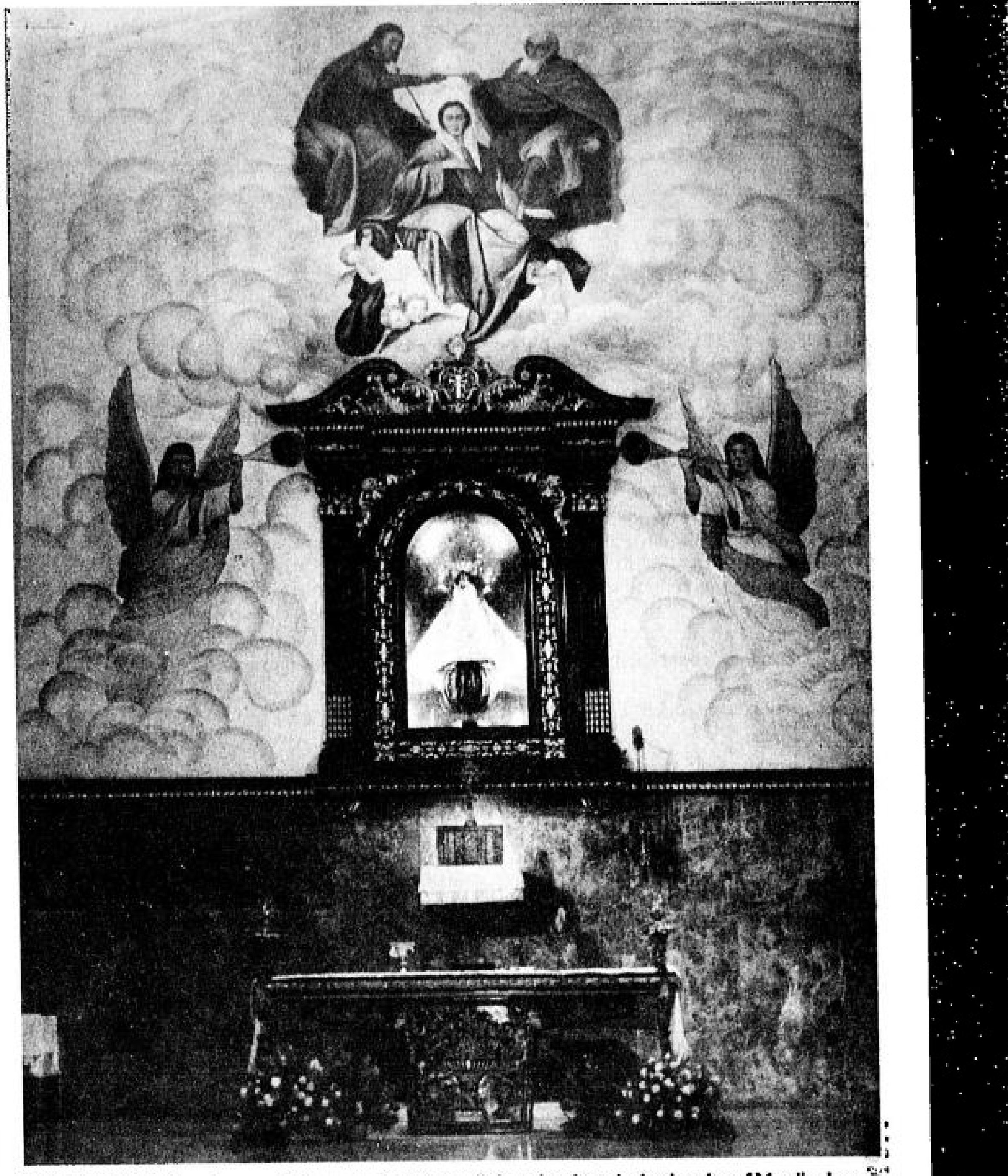
The proposed ordinance was scheduled for third and final reading in a council session yesterday afternoon.

If approved, the ordinance will probably be enforced next year after implementing rules are completed, Marquez added.

This early, however, the local government has been receiving complaints from commuters that some tricycle drivers are already charging higher fares.

Marquez said commuters should get the plate numbers of erring drivers and report them to the council or to the regulatory board.

The proposal to hike tricycle fares began with a resolution from a group of drivers and operators in the city, later endorsed by the Public Utility Vehicle Transport Regulatory Board to the City Council, which conducted public hearings starting last month.



THE ERMITA Church, one of the more familiar religious landmarks in the city of Manila, has just been declared a shrine by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales. The patroness of the church is the Nuestra Señora de Guia whose image is said to have been washed ashore in the 1950s near the place where the church now stands. ANTONIO SO ADRIANO

Ermita Church declared Manila's ninth holy shrine

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE ERMITA CHURCH HAS BEEN OFFICIALly declared a shrine, bringing to nine the total number of holy shrines in the Archdiocese of Manila.

The church, the primary place of visitation for Marian devotees, was officially declared by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales the Archdiocesan Shrine of Nuestra Señora de Guia effective last Dec. 3.

The title was officially conferred on the church during a mass celebrated by the prelate yesterday.

A church is declared a shrine based on its historical significance, extraordinary devotion to its patron, and visitation from parishioners coming from other parts of its archdiocese.

It should also have the capacity to accommodate a large number of pilgrims and a social action program that promotes the full human development of its members.

Ermita Church, located in Ermita, Manila, was named after its patroness, Nuestra Señora de Guia, whose image is said to be the oldest in the country.

Based on historical accounts, soldiers of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi found the image when they seized the city on May 19, 1571.

It had been placed by natives atop a trunk surrounded by pandan trees.

The image was given the title "Guia" or guide after she "began to shed rays of charity in ever so many miracles she wrought in behalf of the people, especially the navigators," according to the "Anales de la Cathedral de Manila," a collection of official records pertaining to the archdiocese.

It is believed that the image was among those brought to the country by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Later on, it was said to have been offered by native chiefs in Cebu as a gift to one of the rajahs in Manila.

In a Royal Decree dated Aug. 9, 1578, the King of Spain declared the Nuestra Señora de Guia as the "Sworn Patroness" of Manila because of the favors that she was said to have brought upon the city.

METROBRIEFS

Suspect in murder nabbed

A 9 MM BULLET led to the arrest of a Chinese-Filipino businessman allegedly involved in the murder of a casino financier earlier this month. Suspect Allan Sy Mendoza, 37, of Moonwalk Subdivision, Las Piñas City, was detained by the airport police after the bullet was found in his possession while he was trying to leave the country for Xiamen, China, last Friday. "This gave our agents enough time to arrest him," National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Special Task Force chief Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda said during a press conference yesterday. A witness told investigators that he saw Mendoza with the victim, Shi Bun Tok or Emerson Sy, a few hours before the latter was found dead on Diosdado Macapagal Avenue last Dec. 1. Five other suspects—Lee Wei Jiang or Anthony Lee, Hua Hong alias Xiao Feng, William Co, an alias Oti, and an unidentified man—remain at large. NBI STF executive officer Arnel Dalumpines said that during investigation, Mendoza admitted that Hua slit the victim's throat while he drove the car toward Macapagal Avenue. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

No minors allowed

SPELL BINGO - B-I-N-G-O!

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

TEN QUEZON City councilors have filed an ordinance which seeks to ban children aged 17 and below from bingo halls in the city to prevent them from picking up the gambling habit. "A number of patrons who hang around these bingo halls bring along their children, sometimes still clad in their school uniforms," said Restituto Malangen, one of the ordinance's authors. He said it was "inimical to the welfare and morals of these young children to be exposed to this kind of amusement." Bingo hall operators who violate the ordinance will be fined P2,000 on the first offense, and P3,000 on the second offense. Third time offenders will be fined P5,000 and their licenses revoked. The ordinance was co-authored by Bernadette Herrera-Dy, Rommel Abesamis, Eric Medina, Francisco Calalay Jr., Janet Malaya, Jorge Banal, Julian Coseteng, Edcel Lagman Jr., and Antonio Inton Jr. *DJ Yap*

Bloody drinking spree

A DRINKING spree in Parañaque City ended abruptly after midnight yesterday when three unidentified suspects killed four men. Shot dead were Arvin Factor, 30, and his brother John Allen, 29, their cousin John Bismark Chan and friend Shermin Franco. Another man identified as Jerome Garcia was wounded but survived the attack. Parañaque City police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles said the victims were drinking at around 1:30 a.m. in the Factor Compound in Barangay Don Galo when the suspects barged in and declared a holdup. According to a witness, the suspects fired upon Arvin first, took his bracelet and shot him again. The four other victims tried to fight back but were also shot. Franco died on the spot while the Factors and Chan were brought to the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City where they were pronounced dead. Rolando Factor, the father of Arvin and John Allen, told the police that a few days before the incident, his older son argued with someone whose car was parked outside the compound. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Manila has 21 new trucks

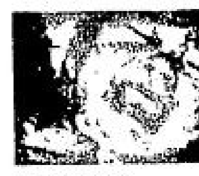
HAAY SALAMAT! SAWA NA KAMI SA LUBAK AT BAHA!

THE MANILA government has acquired 21 brand new dump and pick-up trucks to speed up the city's development programs, including road maintenance, flood control and urban development projects. Mayor Lito Atienza, who led the turnover rites of the heavy-duty vehicles to the city's engineering office, said the trucks would be made available during emergencies, including ferrying stranded commuters in flood-prone areas. The trucks will also be used for various public work projects being carried out by City Hall under the "Buhayin ang Maynila" program. The trucks, consisting of eight Isuzu IPV pick-up trucks, 11 Isuzu NPR and two Isuzu FTR dump trucks, are worth almost P30 million. *Tina G. Santos*

Thieves strike thrice

THIEVES broke into three establishments in Caloocan and Valenzuela and stole almost P200,000 worth of cash and property before dawn Sunday. Robbed were a Natasha franchise store in Sta. Quiteria, Caloocan City, the Western Union branch on MacArthur Highway in Karuhatan, Valenzuela and a payment center, also in Valenzuela City. The police said four men on board a cab forced open the doors of the franchise store and took all the products inside, including a TV set and transistor radio. On the other hand, the robbers who robbed the two other establishments gained entry by creating holes in the walls using acetylene torches. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Sunshine needs your help



ABBIGAT

ONE-YEAR-OLD SUNSHINE GRACE ABBIGAT has infected hemangioma on her upper arm. Her parents, Jose and Bernalyn can barely make ends meet, much more shoulder the cost of their daughter's medication. Sunshine, who just turned one last Dec. 3, now needs to undergo magnetic resonance imaging which costs around P8,000. Sunshine and her parents are appealing to kindhearted readers for financial and medical assistance. Interested parties may contact them through 0920-4331095. Donations may also be coursed through UCPB Savings account no. 108-136802-3 (Recto branch), c/o Editha Castillo.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 13, 2005
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Zeph 3:1-2,9-13
Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people, "What do you think of this? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said to him: 'Son, today go and work in my vineyard.' And the son answered: 'I don't want to.' But later he thought better of it and went. Then the father went to the second and gave him the same command. This son replied: 'I will go, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what the father wanted?" They answered, "The first." And Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you: the publicans and the prostitutes are ahead of you on the way to the kingdom of heaven. For John came to show you the way of goodness but you did not believe him, yet the publicans and the prostitutes did. You were witnesses of this, but you neither repented nor believed him."

Commentary

Another story: a man had two sons (or daughters) and one says that they will obey promptly and doesn't move. The other is reluctant to obey, but does in the end. Which are we? Do we acknowledge that prostitutes, publicans are ahead of us in the kingdom of God? Do we think that we're pretty good but live without passion or grace, without obedience and without making sure that there is wine for the poor and justice and peace for all? Our God is ever-closer to us. Isn't it time to get ourselves moving and seek first God's way in our life and world? Pray to Lucy for eyes that can see: ourselves truly and God's designs for all of us.

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Isafp doesn't have bugging equipment

From page A16

enemy in the Erap administration, such as then Customs Commissioner Nelson Tan.

I forgot to apologize to Calimlim for writing about it in my column during Erap's time. I now publicly apologize to JoeCal.

Why does the Isafp keep quiet about the wiretapping, I asked an Isafp officer. "Sir, we don't want to show our weak hand to the public," he said.

But I know for a fact that the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force under then national police chief Panfilo "Ping" Lacson acquired bugging devices during the Erap administration.

Lacson never turned over those bugging equipment after Erap was driven out of office. The people now holding the bugging device are capable of tapping phones.

Who are these people? Why don't we ask Sen. Ping Lacson?

Las Piñas revives salt-making tradition

From page A1

of the Las Piñas Historical Corridor project, which Villar hopes will instill cultural pride among the residents.

Part of the project includes the construction of the boundary arch between Las Piñas and Parañaque City, a historical and cultural museum, and the Las Piñas City District Hospital.

Villar said the center could become one of the educational sites for students "so they can learn the process of salt-making, which made Las Piñas City famous several decades ago."

Due to urbanization and the migration of people from the provinces to the city, the salt beds were gradually eaten up by subdivisions and buildings, Joyce Crisanto, spokesperson for the project, told the INQUIRER.

"Today, if you ask kids or even people in their 20s, they would have no idea that Las Piñas was once the salt capital of Metro Manila," Crisanto said.

The Irasan Center hopes to introduce the younger generation to the tradition of salt-making, she added.

The center was developed with the help and technological know-how of professors from the Pangasinan State University.

It has four ponds—three evaporating ponds where the salinity of filtered water coming from the Las Piñas River is intensified, and a crystallizing pond where the salt is harvested.

"Each pond is about half an inch deeper than the previous one to facilitate the flow of water into the crystallizing pond. The water is pumped into the reservoir," Rafael Merza, a PSU professor, explained to the INQUIRER yesterday.

Each salt bed, measuring about 25 square meters, could yield up to 50 kilos of salt a day, Merza added.

Salt-making season begins in January and runs until the summer months. During the rainy months, the center could serve as a fish pond.

"The center has three purposes. At the beginning of the year, it's salt-making. During the rainy season, it's a tilapia farm. Mangroves will also be planted which could provide residents livelihood opportunities," Villar said.

However, the senator stressed that the project would not be focused so much on generating income, as "saving the remaining cultural glory of Las Piñas City."

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Fake dollar bills, bank notes seized

By Margaux C. Ortiz

BEWARE OF FAKE US DOLLARS especially this holiday season.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) issued this reminder to the public yesterday as its agents arrested two members of a syndicate involved in the printing of counterfeit dollar bills last week.

Felizardo Boizer, 44, of Lot 17, Block 65, PKG PHI Bagong Silang, Caloocan City, and Francisco Imperial, 62, of Apito Cruz Extension, Malibay, Pasay City, were arrested during a buy-bust operation at SM Las Piñas last Dec. 7.

Seized from them were $100 million in fake treasury notes and $80,000 in counterfeit dollars, NBI National Capital Region chief Ruel Lasala said.

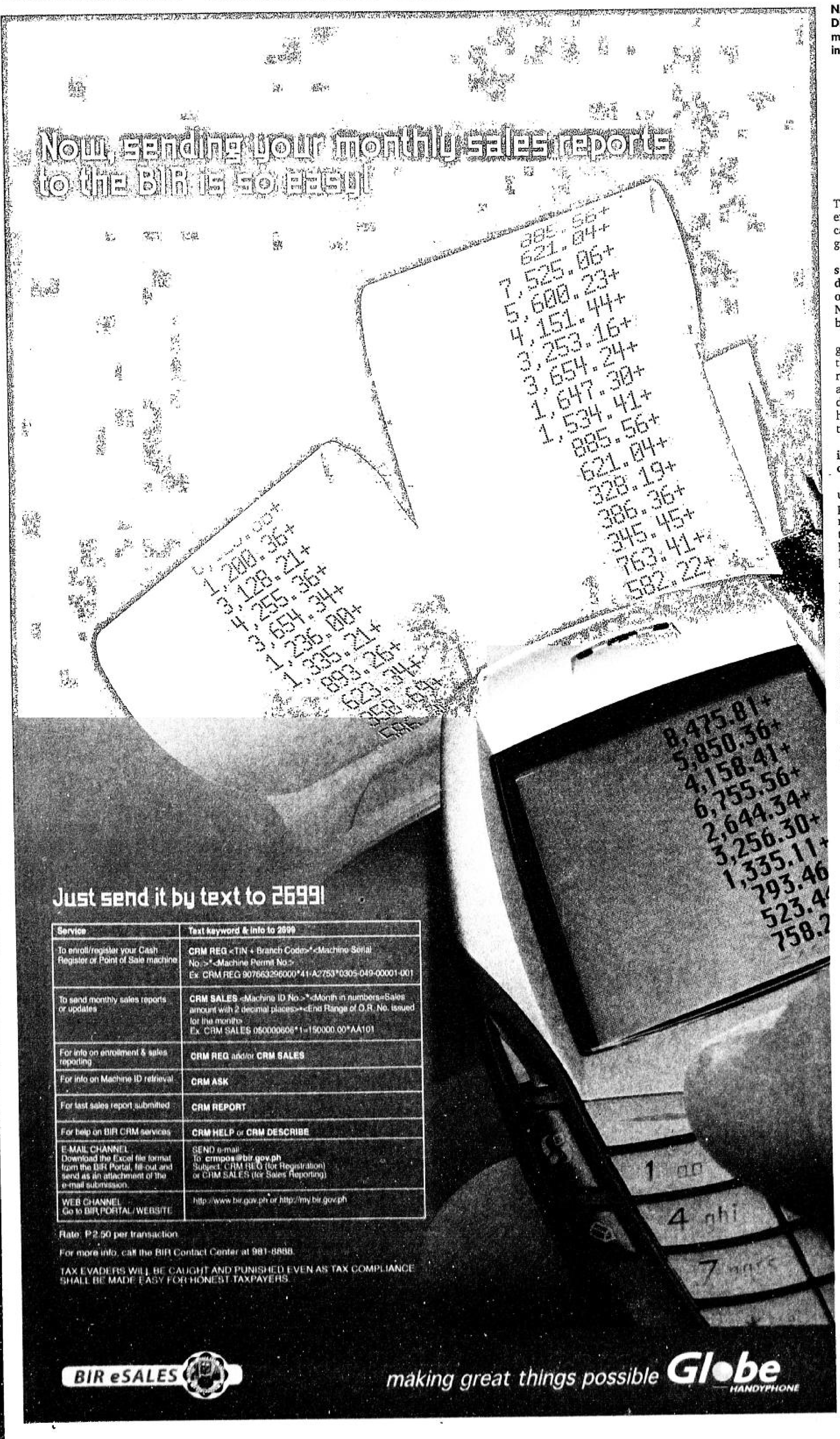
NBI NCR executive officer Rosauro Bautista said the suspects sold the bills at P20,000 per bundle.

"They use (the bills) to purchase goods during the Christmas season, victimizing businessmen and shoppers alike," he said.

Lasala said they were investigating the source of the fake US dollar bills and treasury notes, adding that based on their information, the counterfeit money came from Mindanao.

DETAINEE NBI
DETAINEE NBI

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation Assistant Director Nestor Mantaring presented to the media two suspected members of a gang involved in printing fake US dollars. ERIK ARAZAS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Isafp doesn't have bugging equipment

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA) CAN'T BE expected to agree to a Christmas truce because they have the upperhand in fighting government troops.

Ambuscades by NPA guerrillas have resulted in the deaths of a number of soldiers. There were no reported fatalities on the side of the NPAs in those ambushes.

So, why does the government expect the communist guerrillas to set aside their arms during the holiday season when they have gained momentum in battle?

The government is bargaining for a ceasefire from a position of weakness.

How will government troops regain the upperhand in fighting the insurgents? Simple. By turning the tables on them. This means attacking their camps; ambushing their patrols; waking them up while in the houses of their sympathizers; and arresting people who give them shelter.

Government troops should chase the NPAs where they are. The insurgents can't stage ambuscades while they are on the run.

The problem with most government troops is that they're lazy. They stay inside their camps, stations or detachments, waiting for the enemy to attack instead of bringing the fight to the enemy.

I'm referring mostly to Army troops and the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police.

The Marines, I understand, constantly conduct patrols against the insurgents in areas where there are NPAs but they operate in big groups so that they're easily detected. One can't fault the Marines for patrolling in big numbers because that's their nature. They are effective in big battles, not in guerrilla combat involving only a handful of men.

But the Army, which has the Scout Rangers and the Special Forces, should go on preventive patrols against the NPAs. Rangers and Special Forces, as well as regular troops, can form small groups to run after NPA squads.

Unless government troops bring the fight to the NPAs, the insurgents will keep ambushing them without let-up.

A truce takes place when both parties locked in conflict agree to lay down their arms.

So, the heck with the ceasefire! The government should not beg for a Christmas ceasefire because it's showing weakness to the enemy.

* * *

I'm not defending the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) on the "Hello Garci" wiretapping, but I think we're barking up the wrong tree.

The Isafp doesn't have the capability to tap phones. Yes, you heard me: the elite military intelligence arm doesn't have the equipment to bug phones.

I got the information straight from Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus when he was still Isafp chief. I'm very close to Corpus since I am an adopted member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1967. My closeness to him allowed me access to Isafp's inner sanctum.

Once, during a conversation with Vic Corpus at his office inside the Isafp compound, I asked him if he and his men bug enemies of the state. He replied: "We don't have the facilities to do that, Mistah."

I was taken aback because I had the impression that former Maj. Gen. Jose Calimlim, then Isafp chief, was bugging his

ISAFP/ A15

SPORTS TV Compiled by L. Manguiat

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL – Saints vs Falcons; 10 a.m. (r-midnight); ESPN – New Orleans clashes against Atlanta.

BASKETBALL: NBA – Pistons vs Jazz; 10 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports – Detroit takes on Utah.

UNANIMOUS CHOICE

Team RP PSA Athlete of the Year

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For the first time in its 56-year history, the Philippine Sportswriters Association will confer its highest honor, the Athlete of the Year Award, not to one or two individuals, but to the entire Team Philippines—numbering more than 700—for emerging overall champion in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Shiela Mae Perez, diving's triple gold medalist, will represent the Filipino athletes, who dethroned 2003 winner Vietnam, during the Awards Night scheduled Jan. 14 at the Manila Pavilion.

Joining Perez onstage are First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Team RP chef de mission; Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., president of the Philippine Olympic Committee; and William "Butch" Ramirez, chair of the Philippine Sports Commission.

WINNING EXAMPLE: Shiela Mae Perez

"For winning the championship for the very first time despite the tough odds, the sportswriters have unanimously chosen team Philippines as its Athlete of the Year," said PSA president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya.

"The athletes and officials who made up the national team richly deserve this honor and for that, the association will fete them in simple but meaningful rites in a few weeks."

President Macapagal-Arroyo has been invited to be the guest of honor.

Hosting the biennial meet for the third time since joining it in 1977, the Philippines—which came breathtakingly close to beating Indonesia for the overall championship during the Manila staging in 1991—won 113 gold medal, 84 silver and 94 bronze medals, more than double its haul of 49-55-75 in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City two years ago.

A 20-gold binge on Day Two, highlighted by Perez's exploits in the springboard events at the Trace Aquatic Center in Los Baños, Laguna, gave the host an early advantage which Vietnam and Thailand eventually failed to overcome.

During an eight-day period, Team RP galvanized the whole country as Filipino athletes posted stirring conquests in practically all fronts, including Miguel Molina in swimming, Benjie Tolentino in rowing, Willy Wang in wushu, Cecil Mamiit in tennis, Ronnie Alcano in billiards, and SEA Games record-breakers Henry Dagmil and Arniel Ferrera in athletics.

Wushu delivered 11 gold medals, the most by any discipline. Athletics had nine, as with aquatics (diving and swimming); billiards and snooker, and boxing eight each; taekwondo and traditional boat race six apiece; fencing and wrestling five each; judo and bowling both with four; archery, arnis, karatedo, muay, rowing, shooting and tennis three each; bodybuilding, cycling, dancesport, golf and softball two apiece; and baseball, equestrian, lawnbowls, pencak silat and sailing one gold each.

The PSA, established in 1949, is the oldest media group in the country and has a present membership of some 100 sportswriters from leading broadsheets and tabloids nationwide.

Busy Japan, Asian stints for Miñoza

RP ace makes both Tours

By Jong Arcano

EVEN THE BEST PLAYERS IN the world suffer a career dip. And the country's pride, Frankie Miñoza, is no exception.

But a year after losing his card in the Japan Tour, Miñoza just didn't only find his way back into the circuit where he reached the pinnacle of his career but also got full playing privileges in the lucrative Asian Tour.

Miñoza, who turns 47 this month, placed second in the weather-disrupted final stage of the Japan Tour Qualifying School last week to regain the card he had held for the last 15 years.

The information was relayed to the INQUIRER yesterday by his business partner Thirdy Escaño.

Miñoza was tied for the lead after 54 holes of the six-round qualifying before slipping to second with a 9-under-par total through 72 holes.

Heavy snow forced the cancellation of the final two rounds.

"Watch out for him next year, he's playing solid golf, the way he did when he was the best in Asia," said Escano. "He credits his big improvement to a steadier putting touch."

Miñoza, who owns six victories in the Japan Tour, has also gained full access to the Asian Tour after placing 27th in the Order of Merit despite playing only in a few tournaments.

He won a total of $122,568 (about P6.6 million) from 12 legs, including last week's Volvo Masters in Thailand where he wound up fifth.

Only the top 60 players after the season get full-exempt status for the Asian Tour. Angelo Que, who checked in at 39th with winnings of $86,952 in 23 legs, is the only other Filipino on the roster.

Escaño said that while Miñoza will be giving priority to the Japan Tour legs, he will compete in major Asian Tour legs especially those cosanctioned by the European Tour.

Next year's Asian Tour stop boasts a record 32 legs and $23 million in prize money.

Miñoza will also try to boost his spot in the world rankings next year. He is currently in 506th after reaching as high as 41st in 1999.

BACK IN BUSINESS: Frankie Miñoza

ROMY HOMILLADA

PNP TOASTS ITS ATHLETES: Nine members of the national police, led by karate gold medalist Senior Insp. Nelson Pacalso and boxing champ PO3 Mitchell Martinez (first and second from left), are honored by top PNP officials in ceremonies at Camp Crame yesterday.

JOAN BONDOC

Still no verdict on La Salle case

By Jasmine W. Payo

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY'S FATE IN THE UAAP remains uncertain after league president Fr. Max Rendon declared yesterday that no decision has been reached going into tomorrow's board meeting.

"The investigation is still ongoing," said Rendon. "We cannot reveal anything right now. We don't want to be caught flat-footed by the public."

The UAAP board formed its own fact-finding committee after La Salle announced last October that players Mark Lester Benitez and Timoteo Gatchalian III had submitted fake high school records that allowed them to play for the Archers.

As a result, La Salle volunteered to return its 2004 championship trophy.

Rendon assured that although no deadline has been set, the five-man panel has been conducting an in-depth probe.

"This is a very important decision," said Rendon. "The investigating committee is doing its job. I already received an update and they've been conducting interviews. We just can't tell them right now. We have to protect the privacy of the people we've interviewed."

The committee, headed by Fr. Nat de Sagun of University of Santo Tomas, summoned three weeks ago several key personalities said to be involved in the eligibility scandal.

Among them were Benitez, Gatchalian, Archers assistant team manager Manny Salgado, contractual statistician Raul Lacson and executive vice president Dr. Carmelita Quebengco. Department of Education officials reportedly have also been invited.

La Salle submitted to the UAAP board the results of its own investigation, which tagged Salgado and Lacson as the team officials who helped secure the players' spurious documents. Both denied the allegation.

"We can't reveal our decision without any basis," said Rendon.

Other members of the investigating committee are Dr. Ricardo Matibag of 2005 UAAP host Adamson, Josie de Leon of Far Eastern University, Arlene Royo of National University and legal counsel Rene Villa.

In 1994, Adamson was suspended from the UAAP for one year after the league discovered that the Falcons fielded Marlou Aquino despite academic deficiencies.

Rendon said the main agenda in tomorrow's board meeting will be the eligibility of athletes in the second-semester sports.

The La Salle eligibility scandal broke out after the university discovered that Benitez and Gatchalian submitted fake certificates of their Philippine Educational Placement Test, an exam taken mostly by out-of-school youths to get into college.

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Peña perfect as a reliever

By June Navarro

PEÑA: Big numbers

DOING THE "DIRTY" job is something new for Dorian Peña.

But San Miguel Beer's heavyweight bruiser isn't complaining. In fact, the 6-foot-8, 240-lb Peña has embraced with gusto the unusual role he's been playing lately.

"I'm here to do the dirty work and clean whatever mess there may be," said Peña, who used to be a starter but now comes off the bench since the Beermen began a four-game streak in the PBA Fiesta Conference.

"I love to grab those offensive rebounds, play defense and pick up the scraps."

Going from one role to another, however, wasn't easy for Peña, especially after the Beermen lost eight of their first nine games.

"It was tough, so I just tried to stay motivated," said the 28-year-old pivotman who traces his roots to Escalante, Iloilo, his grandfather's town.

Though he still lurks behind the shadows of Danny Seigle, Danny Ildefonso and Dondon Hontiveros, Peña's positive approach has worked wonders for the Beermen.

Peña banged in 11 points on five-of-six shooting and hauled down 10 rebounds in the Beermen's 90-76 whacking of the Coca-Cola Tigers last Friday.

He followed it up with 12 points and seven rebounds, five of them offensive caroms, after San Miguel toppled leader Purefoods, 74-68, last Sunday.

San Miguel's last four games saw Peña racking up 13.3 points on a 53.5-percent field-goal shooting and 10 boards per game.

Those figures made Peña the runaway choice for the San Mig Coffee-PBA Press Corps Player of the Week, an accolade which ordinarily goes to his more celebrated teammates.

"They're not paying that much attention to me, so what I do is just follow the main men on our team and pick it up from there," said Peña. "But it's a little too early to be excited. It's still a long way to go."

De Leon dominates maiden Tagaytay BMX racing

THE POPULARITY OF BMX RACING IN THE country rose after the holding of the BMX Demo Race during the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games in Tagaytay City. Mayor Abraham Tolentino supervised the construction of a 400-meter BMX course that conformed to UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) standards at the Tagaytay International Convention Center complex—the first of its kind in Southeast Asia. The BMX Demo Race was sanctioned by the Asean Cycling Association, led by its secretary general Manial Mannikam of Malaysia. PhilCycling, the national federation of cycling headed by Bert Lina, has a BMX commission in its organization with Montecristo Mendegoria as head. Eric John de Leon won the gold medal, with Eleazar Zapanta clinching the silver and Jun Miguel Lalo the bronze in the Demo Event. BMX racing is on the roster of events in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

SPRING Cooking Oil skipper Mar Reyes receives the trophy from Quezon City councilor Ariel Inton after his team won the Picaa open basketball title. Also in picture are Commissioner Eusebio "Boy" Ong (in striped shirt), coach Efren "Yong" Garcia (in white polo shirt) and other members of the team.

Spring Cooking Oil cagers sweep Mediatrix, bag Picaa Open title

SPRING COOKING OIL ADDED ANother trophy to its collection by winning the Picaa Open basketball tournament Sunday at the Philippine Buddhacare gym in Quezon City.

Led by Derrick Hubalde and Gilbert Neo, the Cooking Oil Masters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla won by forfeiture over Mediatrix Telecom with 1:54 left in the second quarter to complete a two-game sweep of the best-of-three title series sponsored by Hang Ten, Chloe Lightings, Tomish Cafe (Dapitan) and Absorba Sportswear.

Spring defeated Mediatrix, 90-82, in the first game last Friday.

Hubalde, son of former PBA star Freddie Hubalde of Crispa, was voted as the tourney's most valuable player.

"I congratulate the boys. They worked hard for this (victory), coach Yong (Efren Garcia) also did a great job, considering he started handling the team only in the tourney," said Padilla.

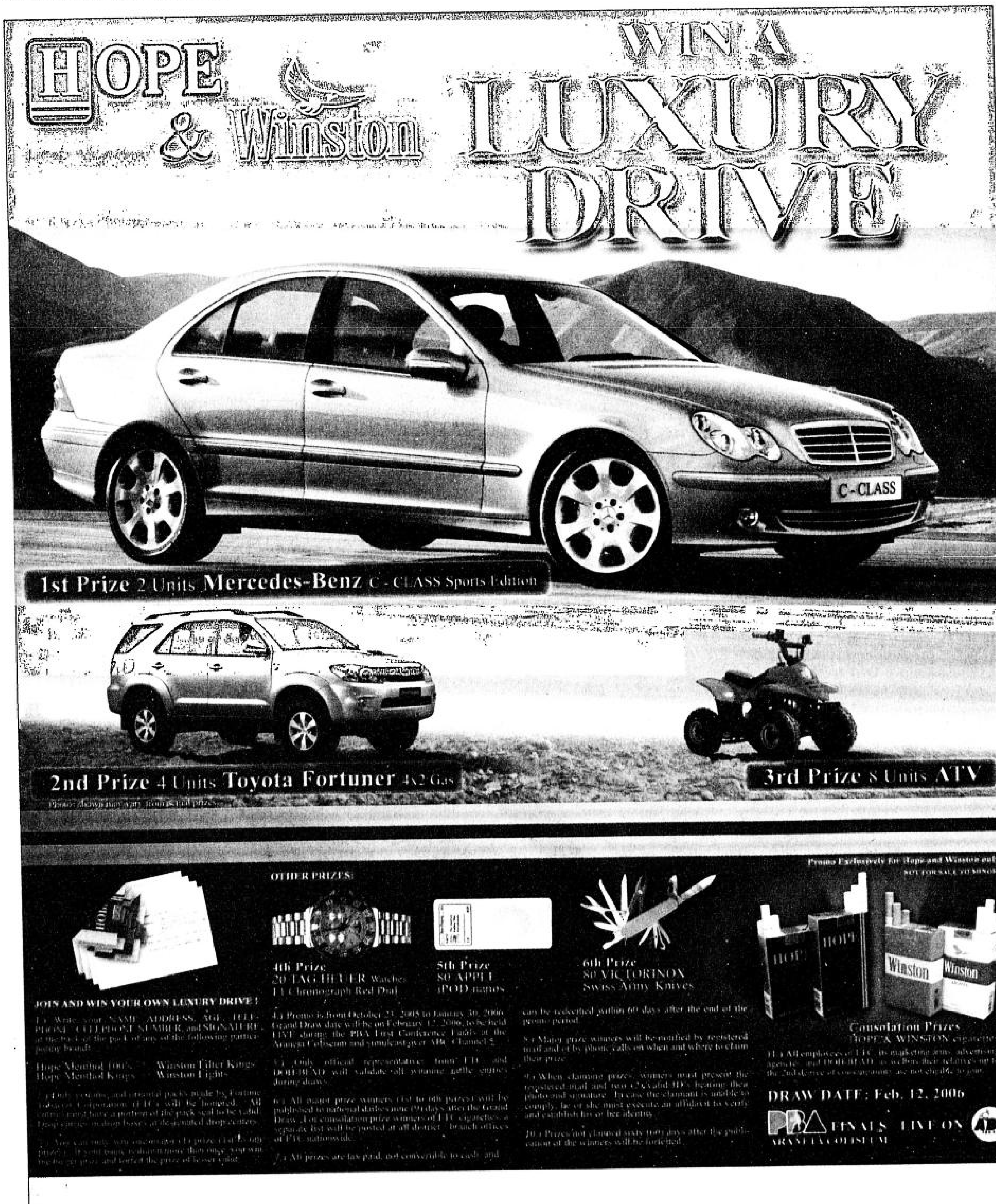
Mediatrix was leading 43-37 with 2:54 remaining in the second period when Spring's Mar Reyes was whistled for an offensive foul against Junel Mendiola. The two players then pushed and shoved each other in front of the Spring bench, triggering a commotion.

When order was restored, Reyes and Mendiola were slapped a technical foul each, while Oscar Montemayor and Ronnie Zagala of Mediatrix and Spring's Chris Corbin were thrown out for entering the court during the commotion.

Mediatrix vehemently protested the expulsion of Montemayor and eventually forfeited the game.

In the Filipino-Chinese division, Nougat Candy routed Dumbo Construction, 133-96, to clinch third place.

Mike Mancilla led Nougat with 39 points, while Luis Cua paced Dumbo with tournament-high 56.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First Pichay team chess stakes ₱5M

THE FIRST PICHAY CHESS CHALLENGE, A team tournament that offers P500,000 in cash prizes, will be held Dec. 19 to 22 at the Celebrity Sports Plaza in Quezon City.

The team champion in the tournament, spearheaded by Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay, will take home P200,000, with the runner-up getting P100,000; third P40,000, fourth P18,000 and fifth P14,000.

Grandmaster Mark Paragua, the country's top-ranked player, leads the Filway team of Hector "Chito" Tagaysay that is expected to crowd favorite Tagaytay City for the title.

Tagaytay, the reigning national inter-cities and municipalities champion which is supported by Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham Tolentino Jr., will be led by GM Rogelio 'Joey" Antonio Jr.

GM Nelson Mariano II, the former Asian junior kingpin, will man the top board of Barangay Alabang, a team bankrolled by sportsman Victor Ulanday.

For details of the nine-round event, contact NM Cesar Caturla at 0928-7132397.

OFPhil, GMA Kapuso Legend Tee recipients

THE GMA KAPUSO FOUNDATION AND THE Ophthalmological Foundation of the Philipppines (OFPhil) will be this year's beneficiaries of the Legend Tee golf tournament, which gets underway on Dec. 17 at the Subic Bay Golf and Country Club.

A huge field is expected to vie for top honors in various divisions in the one-day, two-man team event organized by the Legend International Resorts, Ltd. (LIRL) and staged to raise awareness and generate funds for various social projects.

The LIRL, which owns the only de luxe property in Subic, Legenda Hotel, the Grand Seasons and Legenda Suites, has tapped the GMA Foundation and the OFPhil as recipients, with the theme "A Gift of Sight, A Gift from the Heart."

Former President Fidel V. Ramos, SBMA chair Feliciano Salonga and LIRL CEO Khoo Boo Boon will lead the hitting of the ceremonial drive.

Registration is ongoing. Entry fee is pegged at P2,000 for club members and P3,000 for nonmembers, inclusive of green fees, lunch, cocktails, awards dinner giveaways and raffle stub. Players can avail themselves of discounted rates at Legenda, Grand Seasons Hotel and Legenda Suites.

100 fights today at SJC

MORE than 100 encounters will spice up the Daytime 4-Cock Derby beginning at noon today at the San Juan Coliseum. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Hosts of the three-day cockfest are Aba Badiola and SJC management. The second round unfolds on Thursday, Dec. 15. A participant may field straight four cocks on Saturday's championship round. The guaranteed prize of P1 million plus owner-type jeep will be given to the winners regardless of the actual number of entries. Entry fee is P4,400. Meanwhile, the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7- cock derby resumes tomorrow. For details, call 7255369 or 0917-8069780 (Aba).

Arcilla joins crack Koreans in next round

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JOHNNY ARCILLA CAME UP WITH AN IMPRESSIVE 6-2, 6-3 triumph over Kyle Dandan, even as defending champion Chung Hee-seok and fellow Korean Bum Seo-yong marched into the next round in equally smashing fashion yesterday in the PCA Open tennis championships.

The fourth seed Arcilla, part of the Philippine team that won the Southeast Asian Games men's gold recently, played in a manner that showed he could prevent the Koreans from again turning the event into their own private affair.

The 30-year-old Chung handily disposed of Charles Baba, 6-0, 6-0, even as Bum drubbed Antonio Sagansay III, 6-1, 6-0, at the PCA shell courts in Paco.

Chung, a veteran campaigner in the Asian circuit, needed only 40 minutes to set up a duel with Jaime Solon in today's third round. Solon advanced by beating Ruel Arvin, 6-4, 6-3.

The third-seeded Bum likewise had an easy time hurdling Sagansay, who offered token opposition except for a brief burst of brilliance in the fifth game of the first set where he broke the Korean.

Bum faces 16th seed Nico Riego de Dios today.

De Dios won over Karl Sta. Maria, 6-2, 6-0, to advance in the event presented by Gov. Muslim "Wahab" Akbar.

In ladies play, top seed Czarina Mae Arevalo and second seed Bien Zoleta also easily reached the next round of the tourney sponsored by Solar Sports, Accel, PVL Restaurant-Little Lawrence, Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Sun Village, Las Palmas, Powerade, Coca-Cola, Stronghold Insurnace, San Miguel Brewery, Maresa Creative Group, Cel Consuledator, PMS Ship Agency, MILS, Equitable-PCI, Burlington and Pixel Project.

THROUGH: Johnny Arcilla gets easy passage. AP

Arevalo routed Shirley Valler, 6-1, 6-3, while Zoleta outlasted Catherine Flores, 7-5, 6-1.

Arevalo, winner here in 2003, battles Christina Santos, who walked over Britanny Araneta, today. Zoleta takes on Arra Micayabas, who defeated Michelle Panis, 6-4, 6-4.

Also advancing to the next round of the men's singles were ninth seed Elbert Anasta, who bundled out Luisito Clores, 6-3, 6-4, and Michael Basco, who prevailed over 12th seed Pablo Olivarez III, who retired after hurting his ankle, 1-6, 1-3.

Other results: Melody Barraquias d. Katsumi Fuslushima (JPN), 6-0, 6-3; Bambi Zoleta d. Sherry Rose Ong, 6-3, 6-3; Mary Ann Luy d. Katrina Pamintuan, 6-3, 6-3; Trudy Amoranto d. Hiromi Shimoda, 6-1, 6-1; Aileen Rogan d. May Herrera, 6-1, 6-1; Reshma Hemlani d. July Javellosa; Michelle Pang d. Janey Uy; Ofelia Arribe d. Edilyn Balanga, 6-1, 6-2; Alyssa Labay d. Zhane Quitara, by default.

Pagunsan, RP team picked to nail Putra title

JUVIC PAGUNSAN WILL REPRESENT THE Philippines for the last time as an amateur starting tomorrow when the country tries to win the Putra Cup for the first time in nine years against the best of Southeast Asia in Burma (Myanmar).

The 45th edition of what is regarded as Southeast Asia's official golf team championship tees off at the 7,012-yard, par-72 Pun Hlaing layout in Burma Thursday with the Philippines installed as the heavy favorite.

The 27-year-old Pagunsan won the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games individual gold medal running away and boosted the Philippines to the team gold with a 13-under 267 tally at The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

"*Isa pa para sa bayan* (one last time for the country)," Pagunsan told the INQUIRER Saturday after leading Nike to a lopsided win in the Fil division of the annual Fil-Am Invitational in Baguio.

Marvin Dumandan, Michael Bibat and former caddies champion Jay Bayron, the same members of the winning RP SEA Games team, will team up with Pagunsan again.

Retired general Roberto Sabularse, the Villamor Golf Club GM and National Golf Association of the Philippines director, is skipper of the squad.

The Philippines last won the Putra Cup in 1996 with a team bannered by Antonio Lascuña, Richard Sinfuego, Rey Pagunsan and Gerard Cantada, ironically, also in Burma.

Defending champion Thailand and Malaysia will be RP's main rivals, along with the Burmese, which bagged the SEAG bronze and will have decisive course knowledge.

A Thai team built around Wisut Artjanawat outsteadied Malaysia and Ben Leong in Indonesia last year, where the Philippines, which played minus Pagunsan, limped home a badly beaten fourth.

Musong R. Castillo

Golf heroes

RICO JAVIER, REMEMBER HIM?

He was the former secretary general of the National Golf Association of the Philippines when Eduardo R. Ermita, now the Executive Secretary, was NGAP president.

He called up to say he was a teammate of Antonio Hernandez, who did something special a while back in the name of golf.

If you will recall, Hernandez disqualified himself in the recent Fil-Am Golf Invitational after discovering that he had inadvertently signed for a wrong scorecard in the third round.

"I will never be able to sleep the rest of my life if I will just let it pass," said Hernandez.

When he discovered the error, Hernandez promptly presented himself to the secretariat to say he was disqualifying himself. He saw the wrong score posted under his name on the giant scoreboard.

"I've always known him to be an honest man," said Rico J of Hernandez, a mainstay like Rico J in the Philippine Contractors International Team. "With what he's done, I'm proud to be his teammate, indeed."

At times, when we are in a hurry to have that shower after a long round under the sun, we tend to rush and take for granted what was written in our scorecards. We don't double-check and, boom, a wrong entry had been unwittingly entered.

Once you've signed the scorecard, that's it. Just one wrong entry could fetch you a disqualification. DQ.

With the sterling example of Hernandez, the game of golf has never been in better shape.

Cheers!

Sad as it is, cheats in golf still abounds.

The sport is actually vulnerable to scoundrels since a rules man—a referee, if you will—is not always there to personally make a ruling when an infraction occurs, or is about to occur.

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

That is why it is almost standard procedure that a player, when the rules permit, should play two balls when there is doubt as to procedure of play.

Most of the time during a tournament, the player is the rules man himself. Meaning, he may referee himself in the absence of a rules man on matters of rules disputes.

At the clubhouse before he submits his scorecard, he has to refer his case to the rules man to resolve the dispute.

That is so since the golf course is so big it is almost impossible at times to locate a rules man to make a ruling on a question of procedure, or how a situation is to be ruled. Always, the safest way to proceed when there's doubt is to play two balls.

One day during the recent Fil-Am, Jake Ayson and I were being summoned to investigate an alleged infraction being vehemently committed by a player.

When Mike Osmeña of the Villa Cacho Team saw us at John Hay preparing to rush to the scene at Baguio Country Club, he said: *"Meron pa bang ganoon hanggang ngayon?* (Do we still have such kind of players until now?)."

Mike, one of the owners of Golf Depot, said he cringes each time he hears of a golfer trying to cheat, or perceived to have cheated.

The case of Greg Norman some years back comes to mind.

Told minutes before he would tee off that he might have violated a rule the day before, Norman, known as the "Great White Shark" in his heyday, immediately said: "Oh, yeah? In that case, I am disqualifying myself from the tournament."

He was disqualified.

If only all of us were like Norman and, yes, Hernandez, we'd have a better world to live in.

***

FASTBREAK. Was I glad J. Ferdinand Luzuriaga enjoyed watching the taekwondo competitions live in the recent 23rd SEA Games in Manila. Anytime I can be of help again in the future, Mr. J, please let me know? Thanks.

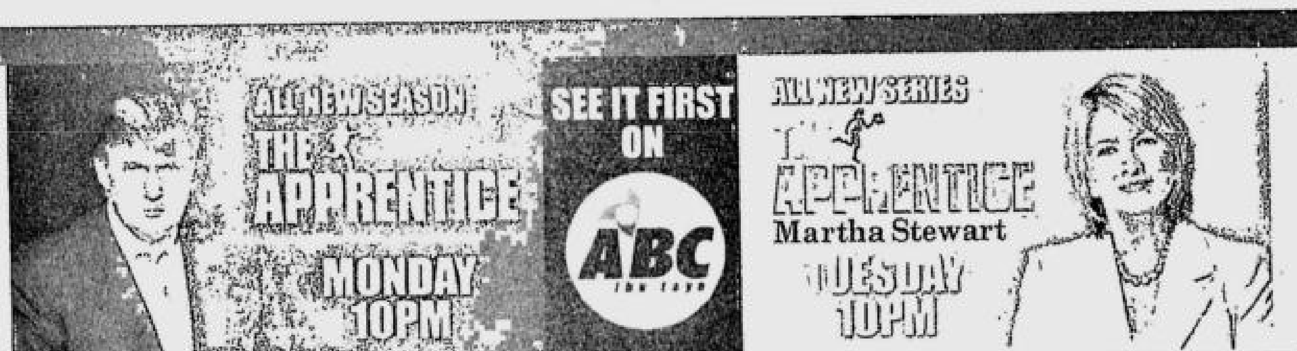
***

Send comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Tuesday, December 13, 2005



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Channel	2:30PM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping			World Pool Masters			Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	Suicide Commandos				Big News	The Apprentice		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Kampanerang Kuba	Panday	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	Bora			Insider
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		The 4400		Amazon		The Outer Limits (Season IV)		The Amazing Race Family Edition		Worlds Apart		House		Las Vegas	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Dugo sa Buhangin				Ina ka Ng Anak Mo				Noon At Ngayon				Volta				American Adobo	
Cinemax			The Counterfeit Traitor					Nowhere To Run			Darkman III Die Darkman Die			Boa Vs Python			The Assassin		
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
Discovery Channel		The History Of Singapore		Battleground: The Art Of War		Austin Stevens		Lost Worlds		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Deadliest Catch		Mostly True Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN			Acc / Big Ten Chall. Georgia Tech Vs Michigan St				Table Tennis '05 N'empire	Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 Men's Sudden Death 7-Ball		Beyond World Badminton C'ships '05				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	1 Hr Edited Version Of Today Show		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		For Love Or Money		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15PM)	ABC'atholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil-Who Decides?	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Encantadia	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Mcleod's Daughters IV		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Family Law II		Mcleod's Daughters IV		Arthur Hailey's Detective			Five Days To Midnight		Family Law II (11:25PM)
HBO		Impulse (3:15PM)				Everyday People			Batman Forever				The Big Preview: King Kong	Rome Ep 04: Stealing From Saturn		Rome Ep 05: The Ram Has Touched The Wall		Torque	
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Japan Video Topics		ME TV		Nuts	Outrageous	King Of Adventure	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Family Guy	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Beat The Geeks	WWE Bottomline		WWE Afterburn		X-Play	Banzai	Mad TV		Trigger Happy TV	Primetime Glick	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Ren & Stimpy Adult Party Cartoon	Family Guy	Wwe Heat	
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Spring Break	Dyes		Punk'D	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Advance Warning	Pimp My Ride	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Seconds From Disaster		Inside 911		Is It Real?		Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster		Is It Real?	
NBN				New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Dyes Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Sea Games				Teledyaryo				Pilipinas Ngayon Na!		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blue's Clues/ What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents: Channel Chasers			Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO	Kumakasa Lumalaban		Batas Mo, Batas Ko				PS I Love You				Ikaw na Sana				Bukas May Umaga				
Qtv		Endless Christmas (Navidad Sin Fin)	Mariana (Sin Pecado Concebida)	Cabesta	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Golden Bowl	Star	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	My Guardian Baby		All In	News On Q	Sana'y Muling Makapiling		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberrys	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports		FIVB World Champ Cup Men's Event Egy vs. USA				Denmark Open Mixed Doubles Finals		WTA Int'l Open 2005,China				Sportsdesk		NBA Game Pistons @ Jazz					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus		ACC Men's Basketball TBD				NFL 2005: New York Giants @ Philadelphia						Ultimate Fighting Championship				Party Poker.com World Open 2005			
Star Movies				3 Ninjas (3:50PM)			Mixed Nuts			The Distinguished Gentleman				Blue Streak			Hoodlum (10:35PM)		
Star World	Becker	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol Special		Desperate Housewives		Tru Calling		Friends	American Idol Special
Studio 23		Astroboy						Get Backers	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville ([illegible])	Point Pleasant ([illegible])		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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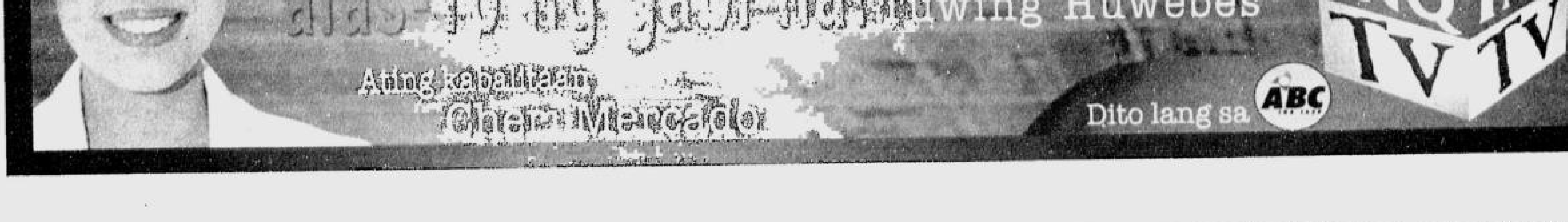
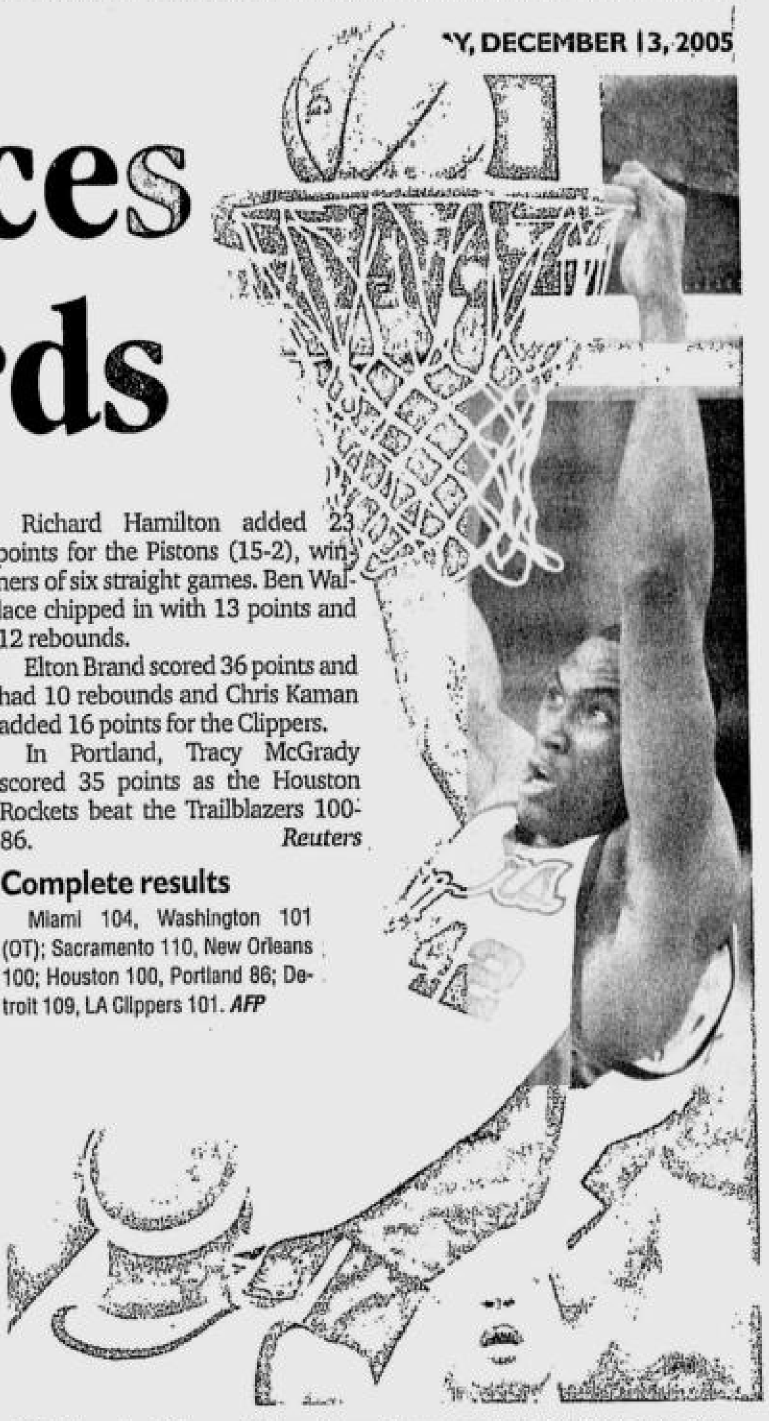


Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
alas-10 ng gabi tuwing Huwebes
Ating kabalitaan
Cherie Mercado
INQ TV
Dito lang sa ABC

Wade, O'Neal join forces as Heat repulse Wizards



NEW YORK—DWYANE WADE SCORED A SEASON-HIGH 41 POINTS and Shaquille O'Neal returned to the line-up to lead the Miami Heat to a 104-101 overtime win over the Washington Wizards in Miami on Sunday.

Wade scored his team's final six points and added 10 rebounds and eight assists for Miami, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

However, it was the return of O'Neal that really lifted the Heat, as he played for the first time since suffering a sprained right ankle on Nov. 3.

O'Neal had 10 points and 11 rebounds in 22 minutes coming off the bench, including four points in overtime before fouling out with 1:33 left in the extra period.

"I felt pretty good," O'Neal told reporters after the game.

"I just wanted to get my guys going, bring some energy and spirit to the line-up." He was just 6-for-16 from the foul line, but made one of his two free throws with a second left in regulation to force the overtime period.

Udonis Haslem added 11 points and had eight rebounds for the Heat, but Miami was just 28-for-45 from the foul line, which allowed the Wizards to stay in the game despite Washington only shooting 39 percent.

Gary Payton added 21 points and seven rebounds for the Heat, both season highs, to help Miami beat the Wizards for the ninth straight time dating back to April 11, 2003.

Caron Bulter led the Wizards with 28 points, while Chucky Atkins chipped in with 26 as Washington lost its third straight game.

"Now we have to learn how to win," Atkins said.

Gilbert Arenas added 24 points for the Wizards, but hit just five of his 24 shots from the field. No other Washington player had more than six points.

The Heat are now 11-10 after going 9-9 without O'Neal in the line-up since his injury.

Washington (8-11) slipped to 3-8 on the road and slipped two games behind first place Miami in the Southeast Division, tied with Orlando.

In Sacramento, Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 23 points and had 11 rebounds as the Kings beat the Oklahoma City Hornets 110-100.

Peja Stojakovic and Bonzi Wells both scored 23 points for the Kings.

Chris Paul scored 18 points and had 12 assists and P.J. Brown added 17 points.

In Los Angeles, Chauncey Billups scored 25 points as the Detroit Pistons beat the Clippers 109-101.

Richard Hamilton added 23 points for the Pistons (15-2), winners of six straight games. Ben Wallace chipped in with 13 points and 12 rebounds.

Elton Brand scored 36 points and had 10 rebounds and Chris Kaman added 16 points for the Clippers.

In Portland, Tracy McGrady scored 35 points as the Houston Rockets beat the Trailblazers 100-86. *Reuters*

Complete results

Miami 104, Washington 101 (OT); Sacramento 110, New Orleans 100; Houston 100, Portland 86; Detroit 109, LA Clippers 101. *AFP*

LOS Angeles Clippers' Elton Brand bounces the ball off the rim but completes a dunk against the Phoenix Suns at the Staples Center. AP

Artest wants to move out of Pacers

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA—Injured Indiana Pacers forward Ron Artest wants the National Basketball Association team to trade him, telling the Indianapolis Star that the club would be better off without him.

The newspaper reported Sunday that Artest, who missed almost all of last season for his role in a melee fight between players and spectators in a game at Detroit, said he wants to make a fresh start.

"I still think my past haunts me here," Artest told the newspaper. "I think somewhere else I'm starting fresh. I'm coming in with baggage, but people already know about it and how I'm going to be.

"Either they're going to be for me or they're not going to trade for me. Here I think my past haunts me. I think they will be a better team without me."

Artest, who has missed the past two games with a wrist injury, was suspended for 73 games after a Nov. 19 brawl that ruined Indiana title dreams last season. The Pacers welcomed him back this year but now face a huge distraction.

"I think I cause a lot of problems here," said Artest. "If the trade rumors, if there is any truth—maybe it won't be a bad thing. They probably could win more games without me."

Donnie Walsh, chief executive for the Pacers, said he was surprised Artest would make public a trade request with the team at 12-7 and trailing only Detroit among Eastern Conference clubs. *AFP*

Viet police looking into game-fixing by booters

HANOI—VIETNAMESE POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING allegations of match-fixing by members of the national football squad during the Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines earlier this month, state media said Monday.

At least four U23 (under-23) players are suspected of fixing matches against Myanmar and Malaysia, An Ninh Thu Do, the Capital Security newspaper said.

Another newspaper, the Thanh Nien (Youth) daily, said the match between Vietnam and Myanmar ended with the "arranged result" of 1-0 after some Vietnamese players suddenly slowed down so their opponents could get the game under control.

Thailand beat Vietnam earlier this month in the final of the men's football competition at the Southeast Asian Games.

Vietnam Football Federation general secretary Tran Quoc Tuan declined Monday to comment on the case.

But national coach Alfred Riedl expressed disappointment over the allegations but said the Vietnam Football Federation was waiting for the police investigation.

Capital Security said Riedl had changed a few players during the semi-final match between Vietnam and Malaysia (2-1) after he noticed odd behavior in his squad but the Austrian denied the claims.

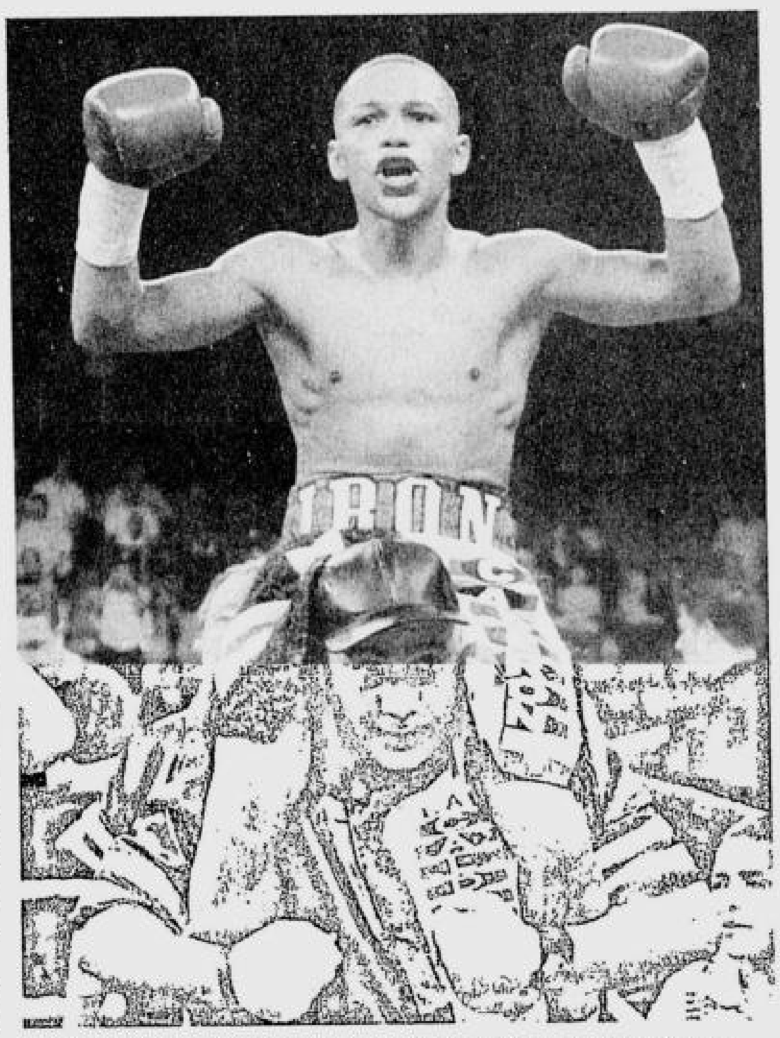
"I did not see anything. And when some players did not play so well, I thought it was the bad field conditions. But now, I have to rethink what I've thought these days," he said.

"I am disappointed. I hope it is not accurate and that everything will end in a good way. But I am afraid it will not be.

"Already, it sounds bad," he said.

Vietnamese football is facing an uphill task to win back fans as police are already investigating a major match-fixing and corruption scandal involving around 90 referees, coaches and players in the professional V-League.

The domestic league has been marred by allegations of corruption and match-fixing since its debut 2000-2001 season. *AFP*



CHAMP: WBO mini flyweight champion Ivan Calderon of Puerto Rico celebrates after beating by unanimous decision Daniel Reyes of Colombia at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Saturday. AP

3rd Asean Para Games opening rites tomorrow; Lea Salonga to perform

A MIX OF FILIPINO CULTURAL DANCES done in contemporary music by more than 1,000 performers will be one of the major highlights of the opening ceremonies of the Third Asean Para Games tomorrow at the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

Tony Fabella, considered as one of the country's best stage choreographers, will direct the presentation.

World-class musical artist Lea Salonga will earlier sing the Games theme song "The Power of My Dreams" written and arranged by celebrated songwriters and musical arrangers Gerard Salonga, Jose Javier Reyes, Lani Macaraeg and Marvin Querido.

A parade of the Olympic colors and official flags of the participating nations by about 60 cadets and honor guards will usher in the ceremony which will be capped by a breathtaking fireworks display.

Opening ceremonies committee chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, said everything has been done to put up a memorable opening show.

Atienza, who is the chair of the Manila Sports Council (Masco), also thanked Lea Salonga for committing to share her world-class talent and global fame to add impact to the event.

"Lea inspires the organizers to do more and do better in the Para Games. We do not see a Lea Salonga supporting sports so often. We are proud of her and we take pride in her support," he said.

Dancers from the 130 public and private schools all throughout Manila, as well as more than 200 Ati-Atihan performers will join the presentation along with numerous drum and bugle groups from all over the city.

Professional outfits have been tapped by the opening ceremonies committee to handle the production, led by Philip Santos of Forsc Ink, Doy Tan's Starmakers, Powerplant of Arnold Cheung, and Emily Alba's Harlequin, while production and stage management is being handled by Dennis and Lori Ann Sta. Cruz.

The Para Games, which will feature the best differently-abled athletes in the region, is being staged by the Philippine Asean Para Games Organizing Committee (PAPGOC) chaired by Michael Barredo.

Donald hits jackpot at Target

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA—Luke Donald has only one victory in four years on the US PGA Tour, but he came up with a big one on Sunday that only counts in his bank account—shooting an 8-under 64 to rally from six shots behind to beat Darren Clarke in the Target World Challenge.

Donald, who celebrated his 28th birthday on Wednesday, matched the record for best closing round by a winner in the seven-year history of the event. Tournament host Tiger Woods in 2001 and Davis Love III in 2000 also shot 64 to win, although they only came from four shots behind.

No one gave Donald much of a chance, especially the way Clarke was playing on the course, and staying away from his nightlife activities when his work was done.

But he fell apart down the stretch with a bogey on the par-5 16th. Needing a birdie on the 18th to force a playoff, he pulled his approach, and hit his 45-foot birdie putt so badly that he dropped his putter and put hands on hips a few moments after the ball left his blade.

He wound up with a three-putt bogey for a 72, leaving him two strokes back.

Donald finished at 16-under 272 and won $1.3 million (euro1.1 million) from the richest event in the silly season, the largest paycheck of his career.

A solid player who has risen to No. 13 in the world ranking, the Englishman missed good opportunities to win at the Buick Invitational and The Players Championship this year.

US Open champion Michael Campbell missed a 2-foot par putt on the sixth and never got it together, closing with a 72 to finish four shots behind. Padraig Harrington hit into the water on No. 18 for a double bogey to shoot 73 and tie Campbell for third.

Woods either had won or finished second since his tournament moved to Sherwood Country Club in 2000, but not this year. He struggled all week, bogeyed two of his last three holes and shot 73 to finish in a tie for 14th.AP

DONALD can't coax a birdie putt to drop on the 18th, but his par on the hole was enough to preserve his win. AP

Wiratchant: Asian Tour Player of the Year

WINNERS: Swede Annika Sorenstam (right) with American Natalie Gulbis after the International Team bested the Asian Team, 16-8, in the Lexus Cup 2005 at the Tanah Merah Country Club in Singapore Sunday. AP

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S THAWORN Wiratchant picked up four top honors at the Asian Tour's Awards Night 2005, including the prestigious Players' Player of the Year and Order of Merit titles.

On a day he claimed the mantle as Asia's top player for the first time in his career, Thaworn, who turns 39 later this month, was feted by his peers here Sunday following a record-breaking season where he won four titles and broke the season-earnings record with a cool $510,122.

Thaworn created plenty of thrills all year, knocking in a total of 395 birdies to win the Birdie Leader award and proved he was the master of the short game by winning the Lowest Putting Average award with 1.71 putts per round.

India's Shiv Kapur, who lifted the season-ending Volvo Masters of Asia title with a tournament record of 20-under-par 268, claimed the Rookie of the Year honors after a tremendous year that included five other top 10s which pushed him to fourth place on the Order of Merit with $242,101.

"It is an honor to win the Players' Player of the Year Award as it is a title which is voted by the players," said a jubilant Thaworn.

"To earn the admiration of my fellow competitors is a nice feeling and the award is very different from winning my first Order of Merit title."

Thaworn won the co-sanctioned Standard Chartered Indonesia Open, Taiwan Open, Hero Honda Indian Open and Carlsberg Masters Vietnam to become the first player to triumph four times in a season. He also became the player with the most number of wins—eight—in Asia.

His terrific performances earned him invites into several lucrative events next season, including a maiden Major appearance at the British Open in July, the WGC-American Express Championship and the US PGA Tour's Sony Open in Hawaii next month.

"I'll be looking forward to the British Open. I've never tried to qualify for the Open in the past because I do not like the wind and cold but I will definitely be there. It is like a dream to have a chance to play in the British Open," said Thaworn.

Two-time Asian Tour number one Thongchai Jaidee, who finished second behind Thaworn in the Order of Merit with $454,335, took the Lowest Stroke Average award with 70.02 while Australian David Bransdon won the Greens in Regulation title with 73 per cent greens hit per round.

Asian Tour 2005 awards: Order of Merit winner: Thaworn Wiratchant (THA) Players' Player of the Year: Thaworn Wiratchant (THA) Rookie of the Year: Shiv Kapur (IND) Host Venue of the Year: Empire Hotel and Country Club (Brunei Open) Greens in Regulation: David Bransdon (AUS)—73 percent Lowest Stroke Average: Thongchai Jaidee (THA)—70.02 Birdie Leader: Thaworn Wiratchant (THA)—395 birdies Lowest Putting Average: Thaworn Wiratchant (THA)—1.71. *AFP*

United Print Media Group

UPMG

Towards a unified and stronger print industry

For 2006, the United Print Media Group (UPMG) braves new challenges and possibilities. As it works towards a unified and stronger print media industry, it continues to set the pace in promoting the betterment of its members, and extends its hands to various sectors of society, like education and literacy. Indeed, since the organizations founding in 2002, the organization-actually a merger of the Print Media Organization (PRIMO) and the Print Advertising Organization (PRADO) - continues to transform itself into a more relevant, responsive and responsible industry partner.

2006 also becomes another milestone year for UPMG as it changes guards. After 14 years of fruitful presidency, Manila Bulletin's Pacencia Pineda hands down the baton this time to Philippine Daily Inquirer's Pepito Olarte.

Olarte leads the newly elected board of directors, which include vice president Lucien Dy Tioco (Philippine Star), secretary Edwin Valera (Atlas Publishing), treasurer Delia Gutierrez (Media G8way), auditor Ron Tamayo (Abante), PRO Ricky M. Alegre (BusinessMirror), and directors Tess Ramirez (Tower Publishing), Danny Ocampo (BusinessWorld) and Zeny Vizacarra (Philippine Journal).

A tribute to Pineda is set today during the UPMG induction ceremonies and Christmas party at the Discovery Suites, Pasig City.

Paciencia M. Pineda
UPMG, Immediate Past President and Chairman Emeritus

"Our efforts have not been in vain," says the UPMG outgoing president. "In my stewardship, we were not only able to unify the two organizations, but also strengthen the different capacities and functions of the organization."

UPMG has been active in representing the print sector in the Advertising Board of the Philippines (Adboard) since its inception; UPMG has worked for the achievement of common beliefs and has been steadfast in its resolve to promote harmonious relationship among its members and with all the sectors in the advertising industry.

It has continued to work with its members towards a standardization of print media policies and regulations, more so in harmonizing and supervising print media activities in the advertising industry and ensure an internal check on its members in accordance to its print advertising Code of Rules.

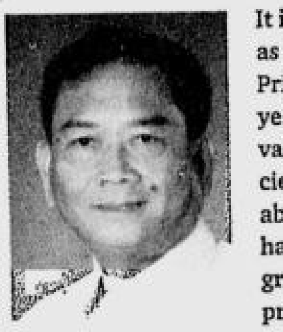
The active participation of its members has resulted in the successful audio-visual presentation on print advertising during the Philippine Advertising Congress held in Cebu. The UPMG is also involved in advocacy projects with its Literacy program through Teacher's Training in public schools in some of the depressed areas in the country, and book donations, to encourage reading awareness and reading skills.

UPMG conducted these activities in separate areas such as: San Jose, Antique last September 14-15 2002, M. Roxas elementary schools last September 30- October 2, 2002, and in Davao City Schools held last November 15-17, 2002. A series of teachers' training and book donations were also held last year in Silag Pakang Elementary School, Ilocos Norte (May 8, 2003), Consolation, Mandaue City, Cebu (July 18-20, 2003) and Palo, Leyte (November 7-9, 2003). Many elementary English teachers benefited from the said teacher's training-seminar/workshop.

True to its objectives of raising the ethical standards and upgrade the quality of both its members' general and individual services, the association with funding assistance from Adboard, held late last year a seminar-workshop on Trends in Print Technology & Marketing Skills for its member publications free of charge.

With this new set of officers, it will embark on a more productive year of service to the print industry. The organization envisions more activities to increase skills, understanding and the bonding of its members and for more effectiveness in the advertising industry and more involvement in advocacy projects.

Messages



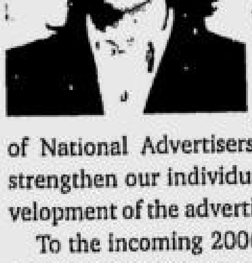
It is with great honor to be elected as the new president of the United Print Media Group. For the past 14 years, the accomplishments and valuable contributions of Mrs. Paciencia 'Pat' Pineda, are commendable and astounding. Her works have served as pillars to the growth and development of the print industry today. It is in this light that my administration shall continue working on the objectives set by her previous board.

In addition, I would like to stress a new dimension necessary to adapt in this ever evolving media world. I cannot better underscore the need to create a steadfast and solid UPMG organization. Faced with aggressive competition from radio, television, internet and other media, the organization seeks to protect the welfare of each member publication.

Looking forward, the print industry will remain to be a strong medium making enormous progress in terms of its editorial content, design and process. Even in this fast and advanced click-of-a button age, print will continue to evolve as it sees more challenges and opportunities for growth. It will continue to maintain the respect of its audience and continue to supply an optimum environment for successful advertising.

Finally, as one of the member associations of the Advertising Board of the Philippines, UPMG also seeks to promote its self-regulation policy through responsible and value formation programs.

PEPITO R. OLARTE
Incoming President
United Print Media Group



Our industry is faced with even bigger challenges next year. As we face these challenges, our Associations must see them as opportunities to grow, to improve and to become more relevant to the industry practitioners.

The United Print Media Group (UMPMG) continues to be a vital partner of the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) as we seek to build and strengthen our individual businesses as well assist in the development of the advertising industry.

To the incoming 2006 UPMG Officers and Board of Directors, congratulations and may we continue to support each other amidst the challenges ahead.

We also take this opportunity to thank UPMG for its continuous support of PANA and our educational programs.

BLEN M. FERNANDO
President
Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA)

Print is part of what is commonly termed as "tri-media", with TV and radio, oftentimes called "traditional", simply because there are others classified as "non-traditional" such as transit, billboards, and even floor graphics.

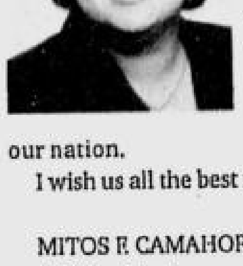
I couldn't disagree more!

Print has survived the test of time. Advertisers still use print for its unique qualities: news value, pass-on readership, multiple copy points, and niche targetting, among a few.

However, the medium must not lose track of the general public it truly serves. There must always be a healthy balance between business and editorial objectives. Print's credibility must be preserved. It is an institution critical to our nation's thrust for economic growth, which advertising revenues stimulate; and political maturity, as complemented by editorial policy.

I'm sure that with the dedication of current officers and members of the United Print Media Group, the public's trust on print will even be enhanced. Congratulations and more power!

RAUL S. ALVAREZ
Chairman
Advertising Board of the Philippines



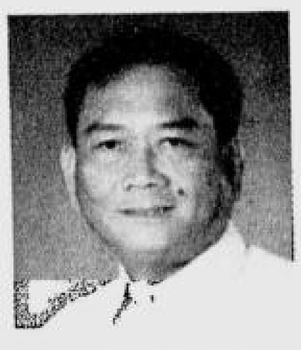
As you take your posts as the new officers of the UPMG, I congratulate you and at the same time commend you for your commitment to take on the challenges facing the advertising industry.

The 4A's looks forward to continue working with you in future endeavors. This we shall do in the spirit of cooperation to boost our industry and contribute to building our nation.

I wish us all the best in 2006!

MITOS F. CAMAHORT
4A's President

2006- 2007 UPMG OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS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Philippine Daily Inquirer
President

LUCIEN DY TIOCO
Philippine Star
Vice President

EDWIN VALERA
Adas Publishing
Secretary

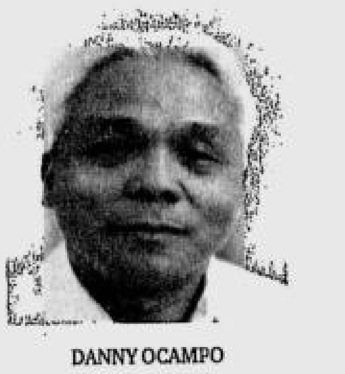
DELIA GUTIERREZ
Media G8way
Treasurer

RON TAMAYO
Abante
Auditor

RICKY M. ALEGRE
BusinessMirror
PRO

Directors

TESS RAMIREZ
Tower Publishing


DANNY OCAMPO
BusinessWorld

ZENY VIZCARRA
Philippine Journal

2006- 2007 UPMG Members

ABS-CBN Publishing
Cathy Da Roza
Atlas Publishing
Edwin Valera
Badminton Magazine
Tichot San Pablo
Business Mirror
Ricky Alegre
Business World
Danny Ocampo
Cebu Daily News
Peachy Fazon
Kamahalan Publishing
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Malou Sison
Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.
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Ron Tamayo
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Josie Tan Magtoto
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Sahara Villanueva
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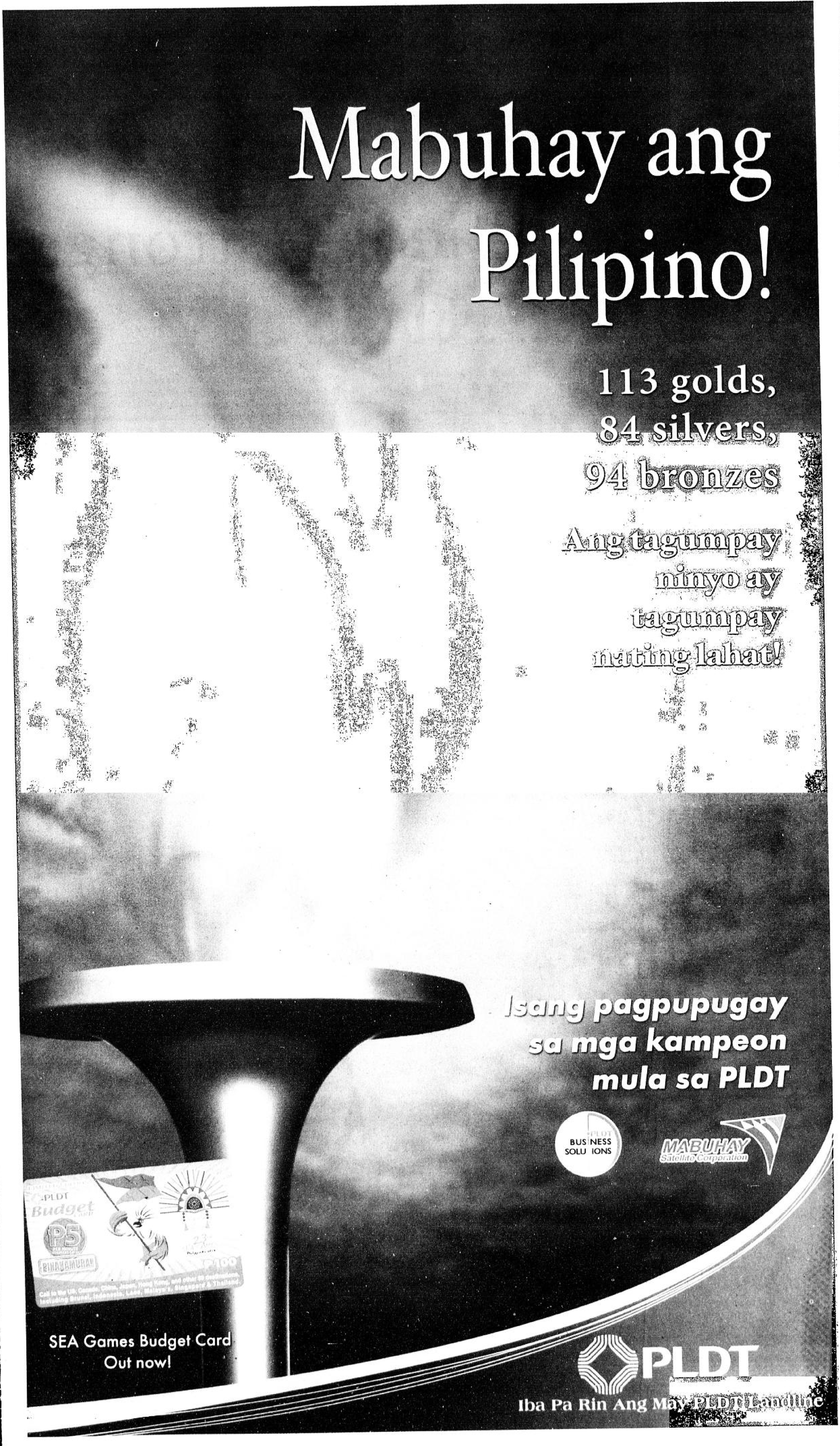
Sunstar Publishing
Joyce Garcia-Dizon
Tower Publishing
Tess Ramirez
Woman's Home Companion
Vicky Canteno


Mabuhay ang Pilipino!
113 golds,
84 silvers,
94 bronzes
Ang tagumpay ninyo ay tagumpay nating lahat!
Isang pagpupugay sa mga kampeon mula sa PLDT
PLDT BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
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ENTERTAINMENT

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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 283 (Smart)

POPS FERNANDEZ, ravishing in a little black dress, gives mini-concert of songs from the '80s. RYAN LIM

INSIDE

Dollywood: Letter from Plinky's camp /A2-6

We're 20!

HEAVY rains failed to dampen the spirits of Philippine Daily Inquirer's employees, who celebrated the company's 20th anniversary on Friday night with lots of singing and dancing.

The carpark was transformed into a sleek concert venue—a white air-conditioned tent with the requisite stage and professional sound system. Guest artists, including Gary Valenciano, Pops Fernandez, Kyla and The CompanY, joined some 300 employees as they partied till midnight.

Aiza Seguerra, 6cyclemind, Jed Madela, Rizza Navales and Itchy Worms also turned up, to the crowd's delight.

Vice President Noli "Kabayan" de Castro, former Sen. Loren Legarda and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes were surprise guests.

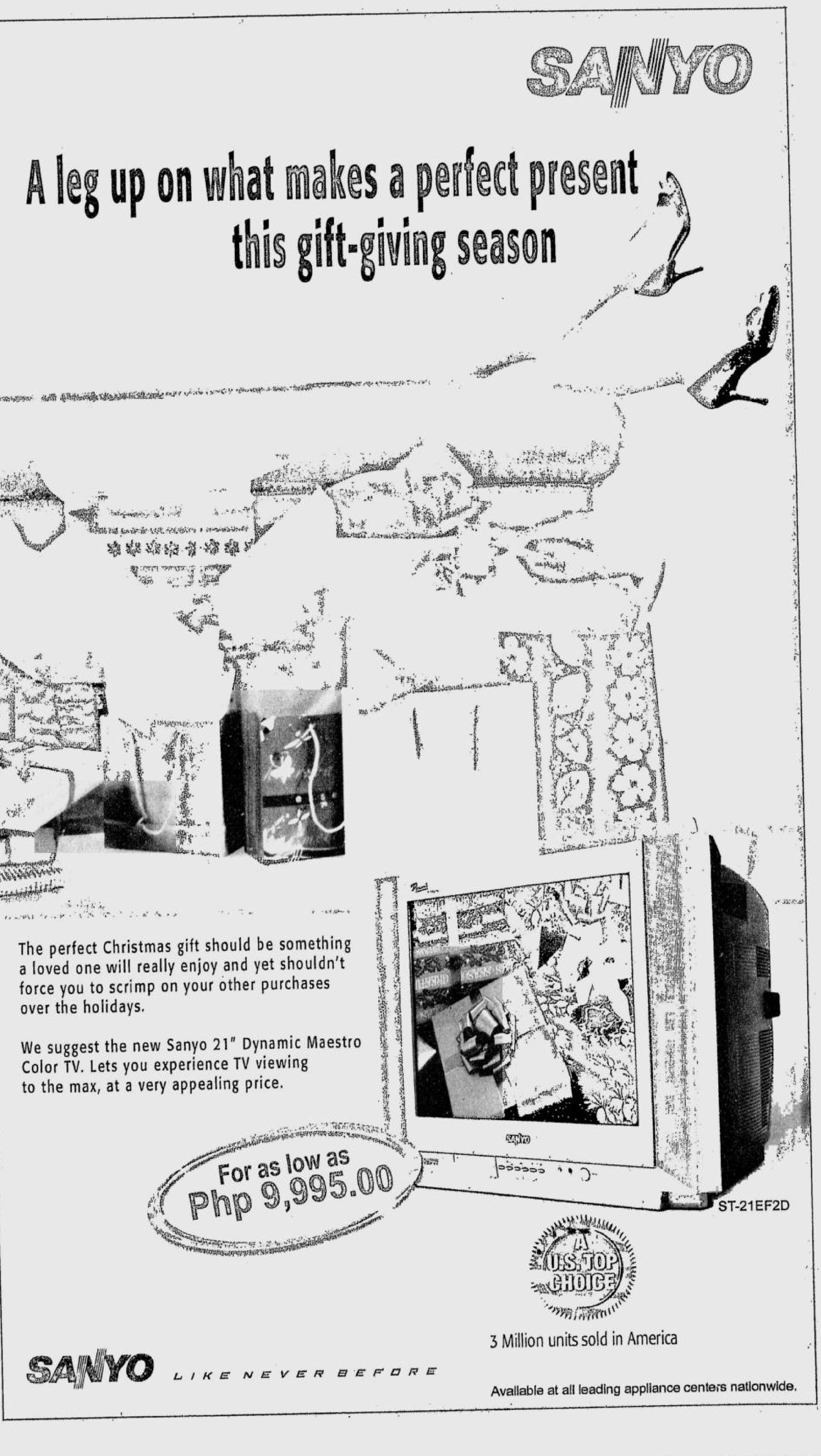
True to the anniversary theme, "Inqredible at 20," presentations from Advertising and Editorial departments depicted the INQUIRER through its 20 years.

Hosts of the show were Jessie Rebustillos, VP for Classifieds; Ruth Navarra, editorial assistant-Junior Inquirer; and Carlo Mercado, account executive-Classifieds. *Marinel R. Cruz*

GARY V the Great rouses the crowd with "Hataw Na" RYAN LIM

KYLA TURNED up with her dad, mom and boyfriend, cager Rich Alvarez. RYAN LIM

AIZA SEGUERRA, crowd favorite RYAN LIM



SANYO

A leg up on what makes a perfect present this gift-giving season

The perfect Christmas gift should be something a loved one will really enjoy and yet shouldn't force you to scrimp on your other purchases over the holidays.

We suggest the new Sanyo 21" Dynamic Maestro Color TV. Lets you experience TV viewing to the max, at a very appealing price.

For as low as Php 9,995.00

ST-21EF2D

A U.S. TOP CHOICE

3 Million units sold in America

SANYO LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Available at all leading appliance centers nationwide.

We're 20!

INQUIRER employees party till midnight: Bring on the next 20 years! RODEL ROTONI

ITCHY Worms were no strangers to their hosts. RAFFY LERMA

WORLD champ Rizza Navales sings, Sea Princess Tessa Prieto gets up and dances.

JED MADELA sings three numbers, each one a show stopper.

6CYLCEMIND jump-starts the four-hour party. ROMY HOMILLADA

THE COMPANY, most-applauded performers. Why are we not surprised?

PEP EDITOR Aries Espinosa leads the Advertising group in a rousing production number.

ASSOCIATE Editor Abel Ulanday and business writer Ron Domingo ham it up for hysterical colleagues.

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
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Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
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2 (DOLBY) THE FOG PG13
3 (DOLBY) HARRY POTTER 4 GP
4 (DOLBY) IN HER SHOES PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN GP

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) IN HER SHOES
2 (SDDS) FLIGHT PLAN
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 GOLD (DTS) UNFINISHED LIFE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE FOG
6 GOLD (SDDS) CHICKEN LITTLE
7 GOLD (DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN
8 (DOLBY STEREO) EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9 (DOLBY STEREO) THE MYTH
10 (DOLBY STEREO) HARI NG SABLAY

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3 (DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 (DOLBY) THE FOG

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 (DTS) EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 THE FOG

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 (DOLBY) THE FOG
HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE MYTH
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 (DOLBY) DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 MY LITTLE BRIDE
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 (DOLBY) CHICKEN LITTLE
4 (DTS) SOUND OF THUNDER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 (DOLBY) DOOM

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 KING KONG
2 GRAND OPENING DEC. 14, 2005

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 IN HER SHOES
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 THE FOG
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) THE FOG
2 (DOLBY) IN HER SHOES
3 (DOLBY) CHICKEN LITTLE
4 (DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) THE FOG
2 IN HER SHOES
3 HARI NG SABLAY
4 UNFINISHED LIFE
5 MAHAROT

starmall Movies
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(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 MAHAROT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE FOG
5 THE MYTH

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1 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN
2 GHOST INSIDE
3 BLADE OF THE ROSE
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
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2 THE FOG
3 THE MYTH

METROPOLIS star
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(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 MAHAROT
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 THE FOG
4 THE MYTH

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 THE FOG
2 THE DESCENT

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1
2

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) FOUR BROTHERS
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 THE FOG

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) DEATH CURSE
2 MAHAROT
3 HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL
4 (DTS) THE MYTH

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1
2
3

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 FOUR BROTHERS
3 (DOLBY) THE FOG
4 (DTS) THE MYTH

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE FOG
2 ISLA ASUL
3 (DTS) EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 MAHAROT
5 HARI NG SABLAY

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 DOOM
3 AGOS
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.0489
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 GHOST INSIDE
3 (DOLBY) THE MYTH
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Cinemagic Pacific Mall
(Lucena City) tel. 6605271
1
2
3
4

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 OBSESSION
2 HARRY POTTER -4

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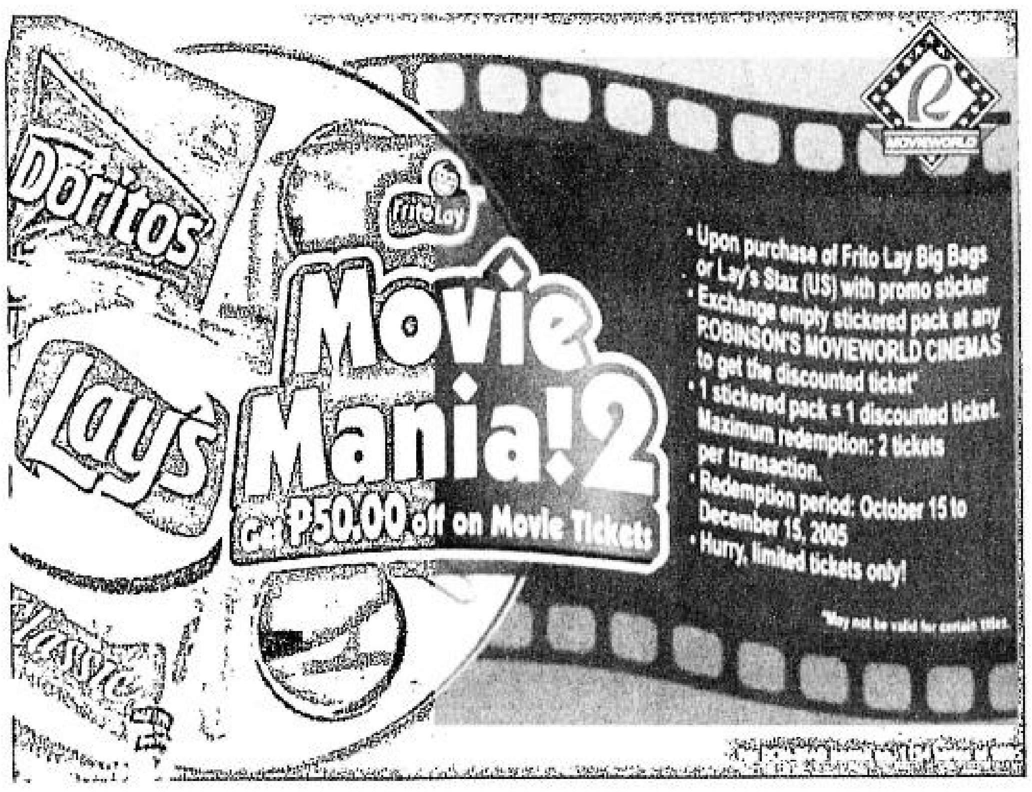

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Get P50.00 off on Movie Tickets
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- 1 stickered pack = 1 discounted ticket. Maximum redemption: 2 tickets per transaction.
- Redemption period: October 15 to December 15, 2005
- Hurry, limited tickets only!

*May not be valid for certain titles.

DID YOU KNOW...

It is no secret that Regine Velasquez's voice is very powerful. When she was booked recently to perform at one of the ballrooms of a five-star hotel, the technical staff was reluctant to let her use the house sound system, for fear she would damage the speakers.

VELASQUEZ

MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE
2ND WEEK
"This generation's SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE with a twist of GHOST."
reese witherspoon mark ruffalo
Only love can bring you back...
Just Like Heaven
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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 HARRY POTTER 4 • THX
12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00

2 CHICKEN LITTLE
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 THE FOG
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

5 IN HER SHOES
1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50

6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

7 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

8 BILOG / CIRCLES
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

9 THE MYTH
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 PRIME
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 THE FOG
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 CHICKEN LITTLE 12:00 1:35 3:10
THE MYTH 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
12:00 3:20 6:40 9:50

4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 IN HER SHOES
1230 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

7 THE EXORCISM of EMILY ROSE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00

2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
11:40 2:40 5:40 9:00

3 CHICKEN LITTLE
12:15 2:00 3:45 5:30 7:15 9:00

4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

5 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00

6 IN HER SHOES
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

7 THE FOG
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

8 THE MYTH
2:00 4:30 7:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 IN HER SHOES
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5 THE FOG
6 CHICKEN LITTLE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 THE MYTH
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE FOG
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 IN HER SHOES

CHECK THIS OUT ▸▸

Sneak Preview

KING KONG

December 13 (Tuesday)
10:00 PM

Robinsons Movieworld
galleria • ermita • metro east • novaliches • pioneer
sta. rosa • imus • starmills, pampanga • angeles
bacolod • iloilo

REGULAR Showing: December 14 *MTRCB Rating: PG-13*

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 THE EXORCISM of EMILY ROSE
4 HARI NG SABLAY
5 THE FOG

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2 DOOM
3 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET OF FIRE
4 HARI NG SABLAY
5 CHICKEN LITTLE

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 BLADE OF THE ROSE
3 PRIME
4 THE FOG
5 CHICKEN LITTLE

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 THE MYTH
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 CHICKEN LITTLE
4 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PRIME
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 THE FOG
4 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
5 CHICKEN LITTLE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-6270

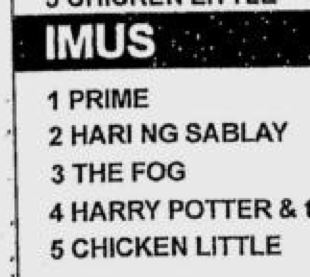
1 APRIL SNOW
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 HARI NG SABLAY
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
5 CRY_WOLF
6 THE FOG

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 THE FOG
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 CHICKEN LITTLE
4 THE MYTH
5 HARI NG SABLAY
6 PRIME

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 THE FOG
2 DOMINO
3 THE MYTH
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
5 HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE



The Perfect Gift All Year Round

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See leaflets for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-483, Series of 2005

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
Hyundai Car Exhibit December 5 to 7, 2005	Holiday Table Setting December 2 to 18, 2005 Acoustic Christmas Serenade w/ Chedi December 2, 9, 16	Pasko Sa Mt. Sinai December 7, 2005

AYALA GREENBELT

Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra Christmas Show
December 2 to 4 & 9 to 11 2005, GB 3 Park - 8PM
Christmas Fireworks Display
December 2 to 4 & 9 to 11 2005, GB 3 Park - 9PM

GREENBELT Onstage AYALA CENTER

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES presents
MAN OF LA MANCHA - The Musical
at REP's GLOBE THEATER
November 11 to December 18, 2005
For inquiries, please call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM

Registration for Art Workshops now on-going at Ayala Museum
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29.
Online registration at www.ayalamuseum.org

AYALA CINEMAS

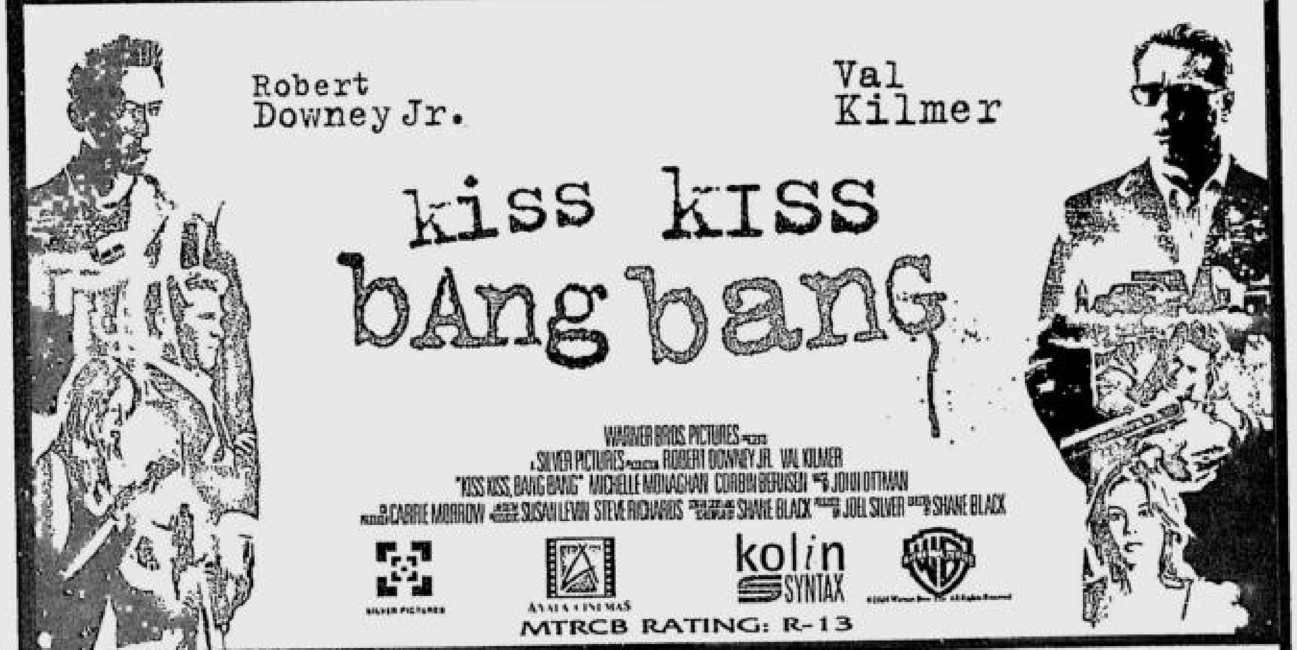
AYALA CINEMAS · THX

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 IN HER SHOES	2 THE FOG	3 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS	4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	3 THX THE FOG 2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE	5 CHICKEN LITTLE	6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	7 KISS KISS BANG BANG	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 IN HER SHOES 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 8:00	2 THE FOG 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX IN HER SHOES 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX JUST LIKE HEAVEN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE FOG 2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 9:45, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 KISS KISS BANG BANG 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX JUST LIKE HEAVEN	2 CHICKEN LITTLE			
	3 IN HER SHOES	4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE	5 THE FOG		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE FOG	2 A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE	3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	4 CHICKEN LITTLE	

NOW SHOWING *exclusively* AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS
For screening schedule, call 729-7777


Robert Downey Jr.
Val Kilmer
kiss kiss bang bang
WARNER BROS. PICTURES presents
a SILVER PICTURES production ROBERT DOWNEY JR. VAL KILMER
"KISS KISS, BANG BANG" MICHELLE MONAGHAN CORBIN BERNSEN JOHN OTTMAN
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kolin SYNTAX
MTRCB RATING: R-13

Customer Service text hotline:	0917 6095900
Customer Service text hotline:	Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center -	842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu -	(032) 231 5342 loc 324

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① The Fog
② Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
③ Just Like Heaven
④ In Her Shoes
⑤ Chicken Little

EVENTS! EVENTS!

MARKET! MARKET!

Holiday Fireworks Show

November 20, 27
December 4, 11, 18 and 25
7 pm at the Playzone

Market! Market! Simbang Gabi
at the 5th level lobby
Dec. 15 - 23, 6:30 pm

Giving credit where credit is due

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ASIDE FROM HONORING 71 "FAMILY-FRIENDLY" TV shows this year, Anak TV seal jurors nationwide also picked local television personalities who, they believed, ranked high on point of respectability, responsibility and child-sensitivity.

Among the national jurors were bishops, college deans, school principals, head teachers, parents, NGO leaders, media men, business executives and government personnel.

Jury screenings were held from Vigan to Iligan, covering places like Roxas, Iloilo, Cebu, Bacolod, Bohol, Kalibo, Dumaguete, Cagayan de Oro, Ozamis, Davao, Laoag, Legaspi and Metro Manila, with the support of Negros Navigation, Cebu Pacific, Columbias, Goldilocks, Panasonic, Hallmark, PLDT, Uni-President, Coca-Cola and Del Monte.

After the votes were canvassed, the winners emerged: In the male category, the personalities are led by **Gary Valenciano**, followed by **Julius Babao**, **Mike Enriquez** and **Aga Muhlach** tied with **Arnold Clavio** and **Piolo Pascual**.

The female category is topped by **Christine Bersola-Babao**, followed by **Sharon Cuneta**, **Mel Tiangco**, **Korina Sanchez** and **Bernadette Sembrano** tied with **Karen Davila**.

Runners-up are (male) **Marvin Agustin**, **Paolo Bediones**, **Dolphy** and **Ryan Agoncillo** and (female) **Jolina Magdangal**, **Vicky Morales**, **Rhea Santos** and **Jessica Soho**.

The stars were honored at ceremonies marking the International Children's Day of Broadcasting last Dec. 9 at the Soka Gakkai building in Quezon City.

It's clear from the male and female lists that the jurors were particularly impressed by TV personalities who were mainly identified with news and public affairs programs, as opposed to entertainment shows.

Why this obvious partiality? It must be because news and public affairs shows cloak their news anchors and other on-cam talents with respectability, credibility, reliability, objectivity, wisdom and good judgement.

There is also the belief of some viewers that the anchors are involved in many other aspects of the newscast, aside from reading the news text that others have reported on and written. This is not always the case, however.

In fact, in many instances, the news anchors merely read the news text, and occasionally conduct on-camera interviews with newsmakers as part of their newscasts. They also give their newscasts a "face," an identity that underscores the news programs' credibility.

These are important functions, but they are by no means at the core of a TV newscast—the gathering, reporting on and writing of the news itself, shooting the video footage accompanying the verbal report, news editing, directing, etc.

If more viewers realized this, then they would give more credit to the "unsung and unseen heroes" of the TV newscast, aside from its on-camera people.

Unfortunately, these behind-the-scenes people aren't well-known, so their work isn't appreciated as much as it should be—that's why the recognition and honors go mostly to the much more visible news anchors and public affairs program hosts.

Let's honor our news anchors and public affairs program hosts for their good work, but let's also give credit where credit is due—to the many people who do "unseen" but important work behind and beyond the ken of the TV cameras!

Christmas album

The Christmas album of **Juan Rodrigo**, **Marri Nallos** and **Christian** was recently launched by way of a mini concert at SM Manila. Cuts include "Anniversary Natin Muli," "Pasko ng Sinta Ko," "Ang Christmas Carol Nating Dalawa," and "It's Christmas." Available at Radio City and Musikland outlets.

One Hope …

From page A2-6

thankful to—lawyer **Katrina Legarda**, her guiding light in the first crucial week after Mr. Gangster mauled her, and during the time when he kidnapped her second child the day following the mauling. Plinky was lost and did not know what to do and Atty. Legarda was there.

Let us focus on the real issue. It is not money. It is abuse. It is violence. No man has the right to abuse any woman or child.

Thanks, Dolly, for this opportunity.

Hope Liwanag
(hopeliwanag@yahoo.com)
Bacolod City

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

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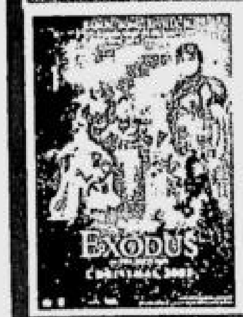
BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

FROM ACADEMY AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR PETER JACKSON

KING KONG
IN THEATERS WORLDWIDE DECEMBER 14

Tickets for the regular showing of KING KONG are now available at your nearest SM Cinema branch. Get a FREE King Kong calendar for every two (2) ticket purchase.
PROMO IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE PODIUM CINEMA. PER DTI NCR-PERMIT NO. 7121 SERIES OF 2005.

movietime SCHEDULE AND EVENTS



RED CARPET PREMIERE

AKO LEGAL WIFE
Dec. 17 • Megamall • Cinema 10

SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
Dec. 20 • Megamall • Cinema 3

KUTOB
Dec. 20 • The Podium • Cinema 2

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
Dec. 21 • The Podium • Cinema 2

EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM
Dec. 22 • Megamall • Cinema 9 & 10

BLUE MOON
Dec. 23 • Megamall • Cinema 10

MULAWIN
Dec. 23 • North Edsa • Cinema 1 & 2

GUARANTEED SEATS

THE PODIUM 633-8976
1 IN HER SHOES
12:35 FS/01:05MF/03:40/06:15
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/11:05END
2 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
01:20FS/1:50MF/04:10/06:30
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/10:40END

MEGAMALL
1 THE FOG
12:30FS/01:00MF/03:10/05:20
07:30/09:10LFS/09:40LMF/11:20END

CEBU (032) 231-3876
1 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
12:00FS/12:05MF/01:54/03:48/05:42
07:36/09:21LFS/09:30LMF/11:15END
2 THE FOG
12:00FS/12:05MF/01:54/03:48/05:42
07:36/09:15LFS/09:30LMF/11:10END
3 HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE
12:00FS/12:15MF/03:20/06:25
09:05LFS/09:30LMF/12:10END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 THE FOG
2 THE MYTH
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5 MERRY CHRISTMAS
6 CHICKEN LITTLE
7 IN HER SHOES
8 HARI NG SABLAY
9 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
10 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
11 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12 THE MAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
2 THE FOG
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 IN HER SHOES
8 THE MAN
9 HARI NG SABLAY
10 CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 THE FOG
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 THE MAN
4 CHICKEN LITTLE

SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
1 HARI NG SABLAY
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 THE FOG
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 MERRY CHRISTMAS
2 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 THE MYTH
6 HARI NG SABLAY
7 THE FOG
8 CHICKEN LITTLE
9 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
10 IN HER SHOES
11 THE MAN
12 BLOODFIST 2050: THE LEGEND CONTINUES

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 IN HER SHOES
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 THE FOG
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 THE MAN
8 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
10 HARI NG SABLAY

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 THE MAN
2 IN HER SHOES
3 HARI NG SABLAY
4 THE FOG

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 THE MYTH
2 THE FOG
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7 IN HER SHOES
8 THE MAN

SM CITY MANILA
1 THE FOG
2 IN HER SHOES
3 MERRY CHRISTMAS
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 THE MAN
6 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
7 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
8 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9 HARI NG SABLAY
10 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
11 BLOODFIST 2050: THE LEGEND CONTINUES
12 THE MYTH

SM SAN LAZARO
1 IN HER SHOES
2 THE FOG
3 THE MAN
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
6 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros

WORLD-CLASS, PROUDLY PINOY!
"Kuwento ito ng batang bading pero hindi ito tungkol sa kabaklaan. It's about first love but more importantly it's about love for family. I LOVE THIS FILM!"
"May puso. WORLD CLASS PINOY FILM."
BEST PICTURE
BEST PICTURE BEST DIRECTOR and BEST ACTOR
BEST PICTURE and BEST ACTOR BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN
BEST PICTURE
NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK

LUZON

SM CITY [illegible]PANGA
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 THE FOG
4 APRIL SNOW
5 THE MYTH
6 HARI NG SABLAY

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 THE FOG
2 THE MYTH
3 THE MAN
4 CHICKEN LITTLE

SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOB[illegible]
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
4 HARI NG SABLAY

SM CITY BACOOR
1 THE MAN
2 THE MYTH
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 HARI NG SABLAY
7 THE FOG
8 JUST LIKE HEAVEN

SM CITY MARILAO
1 FOUR BROTHERS
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 CHICKEN LITTLE
4 THE FOG

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 THE FOG
4 CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY LUCENA
1 THE MYTH
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 HARI NG SABLAY
4 CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 THE MYTH
4 CHICKEN LITTLE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS
2 THE FOG
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5 CHICKEN LITTLE
6 HARI NG SABLAY
7 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
8 THE MYTH

SM CITY ILOILO
1 DOMINO
2 RESERVED
3 THE MYTH
4 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5 CHICKEN LITTLE
6 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
7 RESERVED
8 THE FOG

SM CITY DAVAO
1 THE FOG
2 DOMINO
3 HARI NG SABLAY
4 THE MYTH
5 CHICKEN LITTLE
6 CRY WOLF

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 MY SASSY GIRL
2 THE MYTH
3 CHICKEN LITTLE
4 FOUR BROTHERS

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 UNFINISHED LIFE - PG13 10:50, 1:15, 3:35, 5:55, 8:15, 10:35
CINEMA 2 CHICKEN LITTLE GP 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 IN HER SHOES PG13 11:15, 2:10, 5:00, 7:50, 10:35
CINEMA 4 THE FOG PG13 10:50, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10
CINEMA 5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN - GP 11:30, 1:40, 3:50, 6:00
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.
MUSIC MUSEUM December 17, 2005 MISHKA ADAMS 8PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

SHANG CINEPLEX
① CHICKEN LITTLE MTRCB. GP 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:20
② HARRY POTTER 4 MTRCB. GP 12:15, 3:30, 6:45
③ THE FOG MTRCB PG-13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
④ IN HER SHOES MTRCB. PG-13 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE JUST LIKE HEAVEN
MTRCB GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
For Every Single Purchase Of 3 Tickets to " Chicken Little " Get A 20% Off Discount Coupon From Fish & Co. And A Chance To Win Fish & Co. Premium Items.
See Posters For Details DTI NCR Permit No A-1003 Series Of 2005
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Shangri-La Plaza

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
TICKETS FOR THE REGULAR SCREENING OF "KING KONG" Now Available
For inquiries, call: 687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
1 IN HER SHOES PG-13
2 CHICKEN LITTLE GP
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN GP
4 THE FOG PG-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

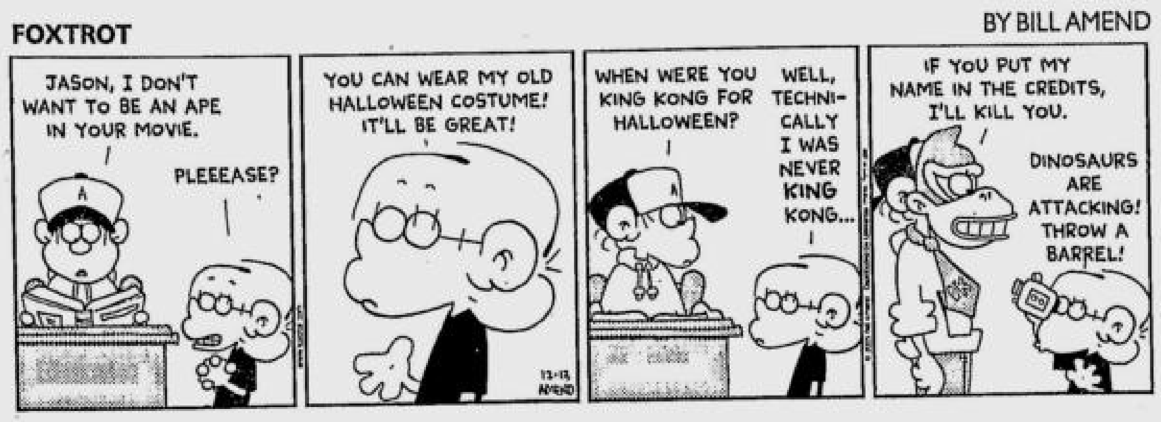
THE FOG PG13 1:35,3:45,5:55,8:05,10:15	IN HER SHOES PG13 2:20,5:00,7:40,10:20	CHICKEN LITTLE GP 1:00,3:00,5:00,7:00,9:00
AN UNFINISHED LIFE PG13 12:30,2:50,5:10,7:30,9:50	HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE GP 12:00,3:10,6:20,9:30	JUST LIKE HEAVEN GP 1:35,3:45,5:55,8:05,10:15

SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898 1440-41.

Araneta Center Leisure Guide
CINEMA SCHEDULES
Gateway CINEPLEX 10
LEVEL 4, GATEWAY MALL
ONLY P99 ADMISSION
P120 RESERVED SEATS
P140 HARRY POTTER
GLOBE PLATINUM P249 / P299
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX
FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555
HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE 12:40 / 3:40 / 6:40 / 9:40
THE FOG 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
IN HER SHOES 1:05 / 3:55 / 6:45 / 9:35
KISNA 1:00 / 6:30
MERRY CHRISTMAS 4:10 / 9:40
UNFINISHED LIFE 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50
ADVANCE SCREENING KING KONG 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00
CHICKEN LITTLE 1:30 / 3:30
JUST LIKE HEAVEN 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE 12:30 / 3:00
...MAXIMO OLIVEROS 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ THE FOG 12:10 R4 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
❷ HARI NG SABLAY 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00
❸ HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET 12:00 R4 / 2:00 / 5:00 / 8:00
❹ ...MAXIMO OLIVEROS 12:05 R3 / 1:45 / 3:55 / 6:05 / 8:15
❺ THE MYTH 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:20
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS
BARNEY'S MUSICAL CASTLE Opens December 16
SPELLBOUND MAGIC SHOW Opens December 25
LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

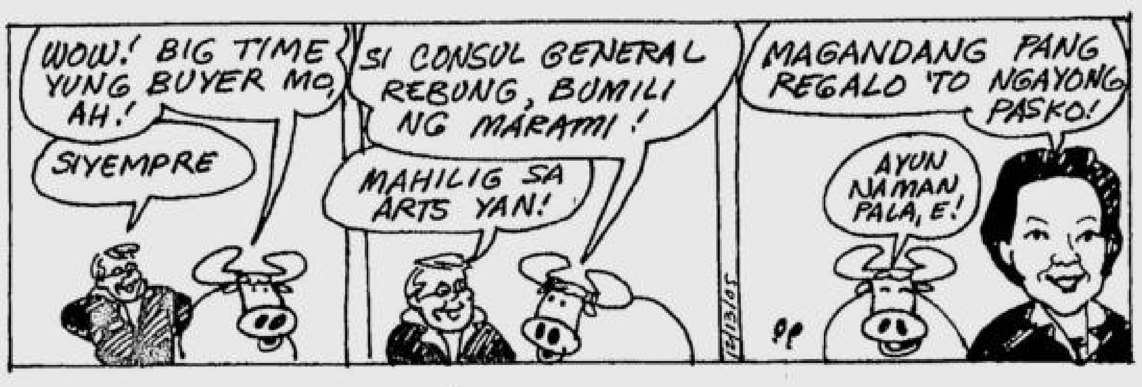
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


JASON, I DON'T WANT TO BE AN APE IN YOUR MOVIE.
PLEEEASE?
YOU CAN WEAR MY OLD HALLOWEEN COSTUME! IT'LL BE GREAT!
12-13 AMEND
WHEN WERE YOU KING KONG FOR HALLOWEEN?
WELL, TECHNICALLY I WAS NEVER KING KONG...
IF YOU PUT MY NAME IN THE CREDITS, I'LL KILL YOU.
DINOSAURS ARE ATTACKING! THROW A BARREL!

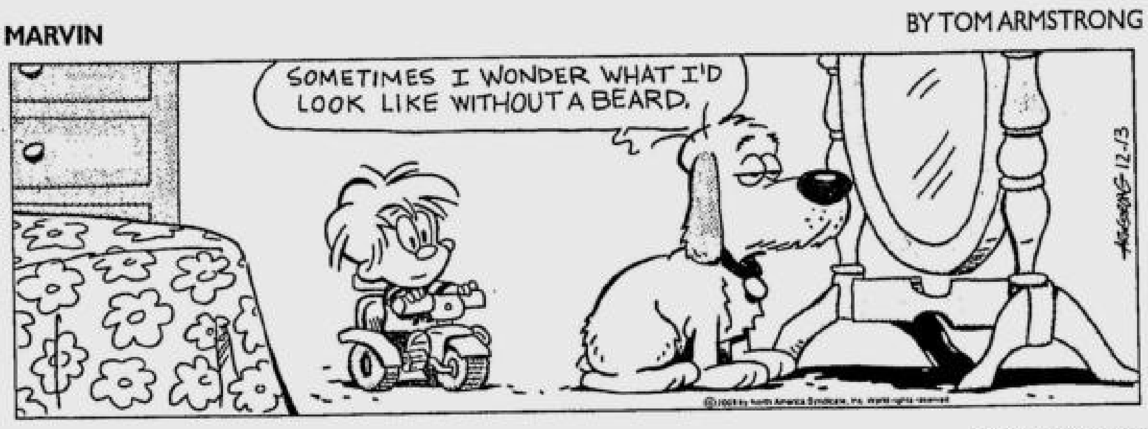
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WOW! BIG TIME YUNG BUYER MO, AH!
SIYEMPRE
SI CONSUL GENERAL REBONG, BUMILI NG MARAMI!
MAHILIG SA ARTS YAN!
12/13/05
MAGANDANG PANG REGALO 'TO NGAYONG PASKO!
AYUN NAMAN PALA, E!

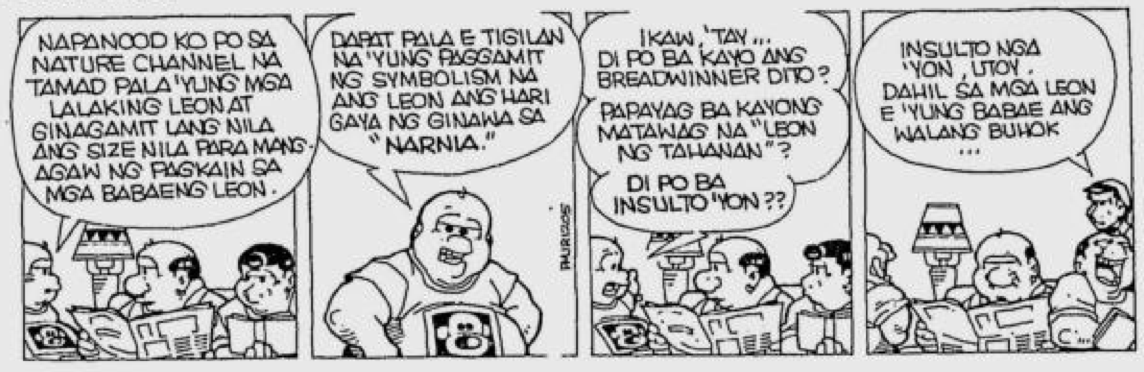
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SOMETIMES I WONDER WHAT I'D LOOK LIKE WITHOUT A BEARD.
ARMSTRONG 12-13

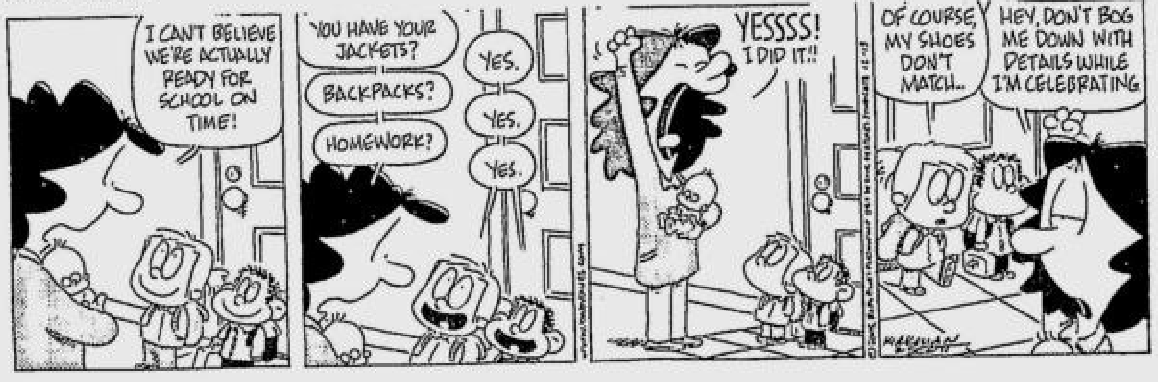
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAPANOOD KO PO SA NATURE CHANNEL NA TAMAD PALA 'YUNG MGA LALAKING LEON AT GINAGAMIT LANG NILA ANG SIZE NILA PARA MANG-AGAW NG PAGKAIN SA MGA BABAENG LEON.
DAPAT PALA E TIGILAN NA 'YUNG PAGGAMIT NG SYMBOLISM NA ANG LEON ANG HARI GAYA NG GINAWA SA "NARNIA."
IKAW, 'TAY... DI PO BA KAYO ANG BREADWINNER DITO?
PAPAYAG BA KAYONG MATAWAG NA "LEON NG TAHANAN"?
DI PO BA INSULTO 'YON??
INSULTO NGA 'YON, UTOY. DAHIL SA MGA LEON E 'YUNG BABAE ANG WALANG BUHOK
...

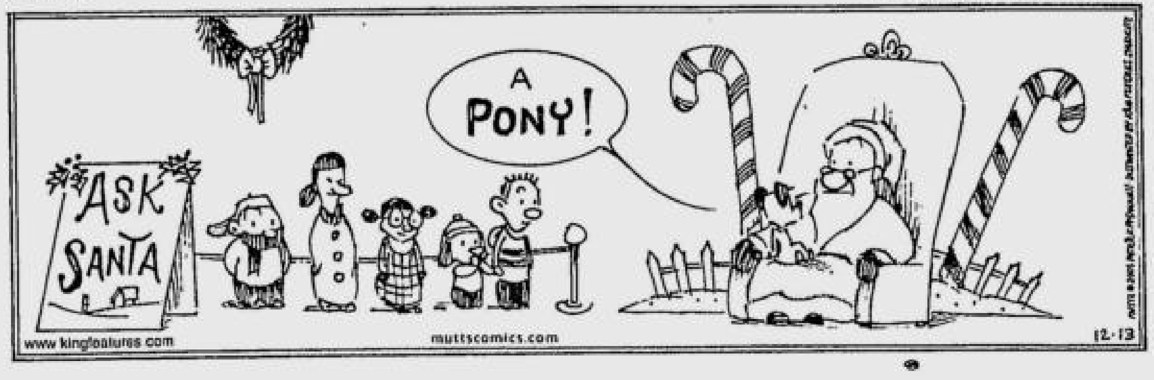
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE ACTUALLY READY FOR SCHOOL ON TIME!
YOU HAVE YOUR JACKETS?
YES.
BACKPACKS?
YES.
HOMEWORK?
YES.
YESSSS! I DID IT!!
OF COURSE, MY SHOES DON'T MATCH..
HEY, DON'T BOG ME DOWN WITH DETAILS WHILE I'M CELEBRATING

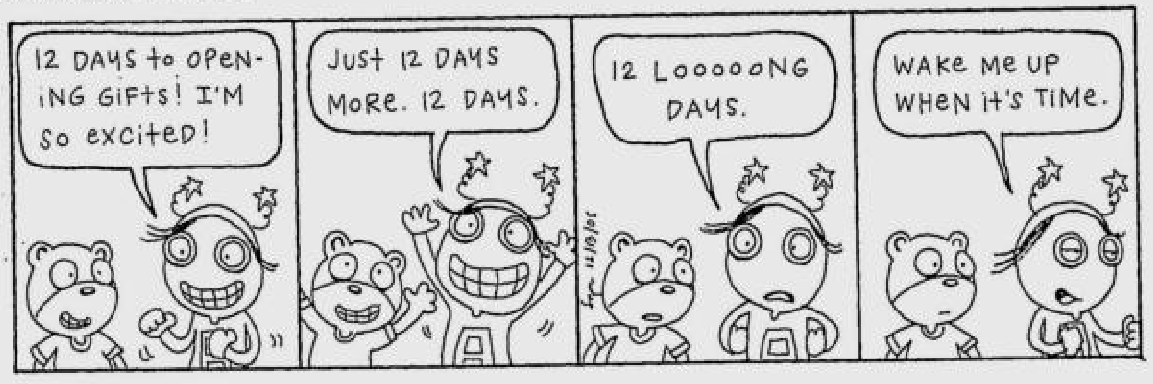
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ASK SANTA
A PONY!
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
12-13

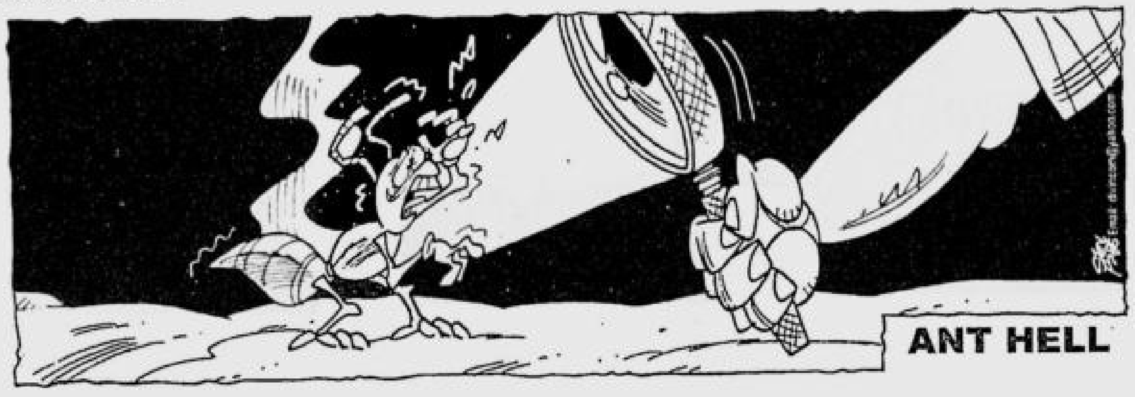
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


12 DAYS to OPENING GIFTS! I'M SO excited!
JUST 12 DAYS MORE. 12 DAYS.
12/13/05
12 LOOOOONG DAYS.
WAKE ME UP WHEN it's TIME.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're observant, intelligent and very thoughtful. Very little gets by you. Whatever you do, you do with care and precision. Because of this, you're successful. Your results are the best. You have a natural understanding of the human condition. Many of you are amateur psychologists. The year ahead is social and friendly! It promotes all loving relationships.

Birthdate of: Jamie Foxx, actor; Wendie Malick, actress; Steve Buscemi, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your mind is curious today. Because of this, you seek out others with whom you can have conversations about practically anything. You want to learn more about something.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're best-served if you shop later in the day. Wait until noon. Something about money and finances might confuse you today. Go slowly; take your time. (You value your hard-earned cash.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): By midday the Moon is in your sign. This makes you a bit frisky and more emotional about everything. It also brings a small element of good luck your way. Yay!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's a bit too busy for you today. Try to withdraw a little, if you can. Seek out solitude. Do the crossword in this paper. You need some peace and quiet.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): A conversation with a friend (probably a female) might get emotional today. You want to be supportive, but perhaps you're being a bit too maternal or nurturing. Is this really any of your business?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be polite when talking to bosses, parents and VIPs today. You might speak without thinking and then later regret it. (This is not good.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your curiosity about life is aroused today. You'll love learning something new you never thought about before. It's fun discovering new things about the world, isn't it?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is not a good day to divide something with someone (especially this morning). I suggest you wait a day or two and give this a sober second thought. It's important to know what you're doing.

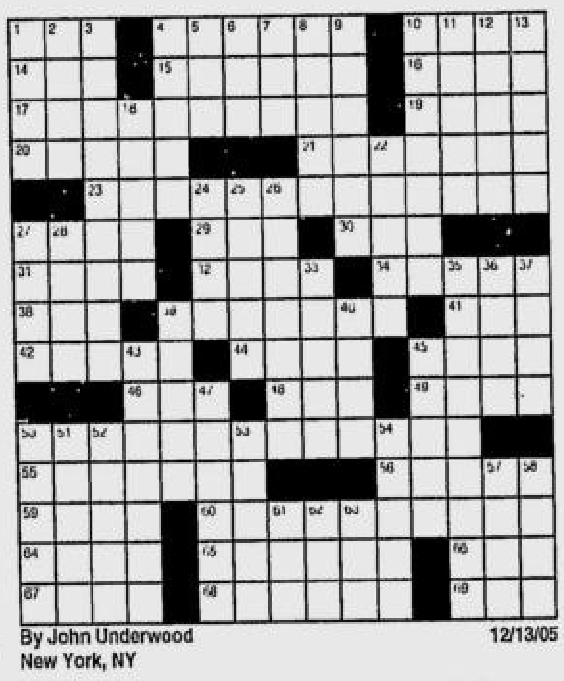
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): By late morning, the Moon moves directly opposite your sign. This naturally draws your attention to partners and close friends. You feel protective about them.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Attend to busy tasks today. Work to make your life more organized. Buy supplies for small pets. You might also want to investigate getting material for hobbies and crafts.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a lighthearted, playful day. Puzzles, games, crosswords, jigsaw puzzles and the like will intrigue you. You want to be entertained!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a good day to putter at home and take care of little details. Tidy up the place. Get rid of magazines and newspapers you no longer need.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY
12/13/05

ACROSS
1 Cut unevenly
4 Trolley sounds
10 Train track
14 Affirmative answer
15 Word for Cab Calloway
16 Caribbean taro
17 Make love
19 Gyro bread
20 Biblical witch's home
21 Fix eyes upon
23 Make do
27 Dams and jennies
29 "Hollywood Squares" loser
30 Funny Philips
31 Au naturel
32 Smell
34 Actor Zimbalist
38 Turkish honcho
39 Make believe
41 Is for two?
42 Kind of dot?
44 Missile housing
45 __ and crafts
46 Booze, butts and guns bur.
48 AFL partner
49 Takes off
50 Make it big
55 Italian lover
56 University of Maine location
59 Delhi princess
60 Make up
64 First governor of Alaska
65 Foolish
66 Neon or radon
67 Actress Ward
68 Greek lyric poet
69 Police blotter letters

DOWN
1 Be in harmony
2 Server's point
3 Olympian's quest
4 Beet with thick stalks
5 Vietnam Memorial designer Maya
6 Annex
7 Required: abbr.
8 Whoopi's Oscar film
9 Calm down
10 Dressing down
11 French wave?
12 Dog-collar attachment
13 Disinclined
18 Stinker
22 Carrying a Colt
24 Word with French or Dutch
25 Bonanzas
26 Curious collection
27 Fingers signal
28 Sci-fi award
33 Smithsonian item
35 Largest of the Cook Islands
36 Art Deco designer
37 State of confusion
39 Beginning of logic?
40 Alcove
43 Devastating 2005 hurricane
45 Ancient Greek marketplace
47 Admit
50 Rabbits' kin
51 Public persona
52 Of sound quality
53 6th-cent. pope
54 Two-time French interim president
57 Minn. neighbor
58 Greek peak
61 Grain beard
62 Little nipper
63 ISS partner

Monday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	D	A	■	R	A	T	S	■	A	P	L	U	S
M	O	O	G	■	E	L	I	A	■	C	R	A	T	E
O	C	E	A	N	C	I	T	Y	■	T	O	K	E	N
K	I	S	S	E	R	■	O	S	S	■	P	E	S	T
■	■	■	S	W	U	M	■	O	U	T	O	F	■	■
A	M	B	I	T	I	O	N	■	M	A	S	O	N	S
P	E	R	■	S	T	R	A	D	■	B	A	R	O	N
A	D	O	S	■	S	A	V	E	D	■	L	E	V	I
R	I	O	T	S	■	L	A	M	E	D	■	S	A	P
T	A	K	E	I	N	■	L	I	B	R	A	T	E	S
■	■	F	E	R	N	S	■	T	A	I	L	■	■	■
F	A	I	R	■	E	O	N	■	T	E	A	S	E	T
I	B	E	A	M	■	R	I	V	E	R	S	I	D	E
B	I	L	G	E	■	T	B	A	R	■	K	N	I	T
S	E	D	E	R	■	S	S	T	S	■	A	G	E	E

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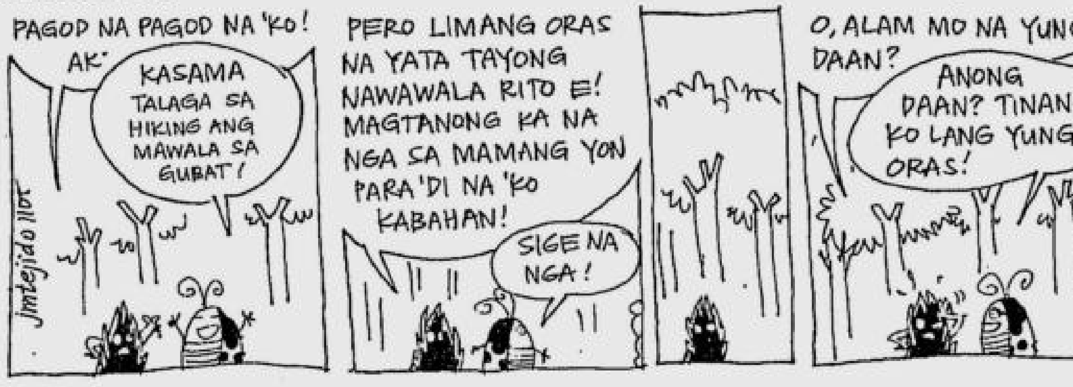
12/13/05

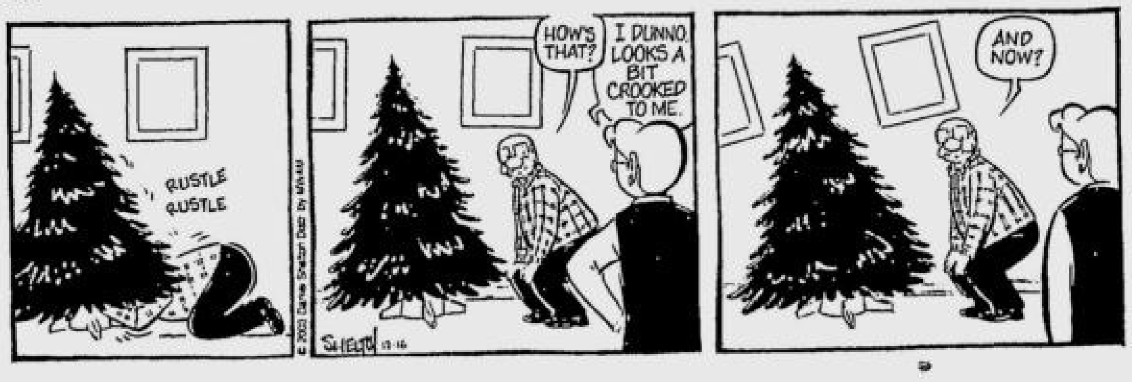
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGOD NA PAGOD NA 'KO!
AK'
KASAMA TALAGA SA HIKING ANG MAWALA SA GUBAT!
jmtejido 1105
PERO LIMANG ORAS NA YATA TAYONG NAWAWALA RITO E! MAGTANONG KA NA NGA SA MAMANG YON PARA 'DI NA 'KO KABAHAN!
SIGE NA NGA!
O, ALAM MO NA YUNG DAAN?
ANONG DAAN? TINANONG KO LANG YUNG ORAS!

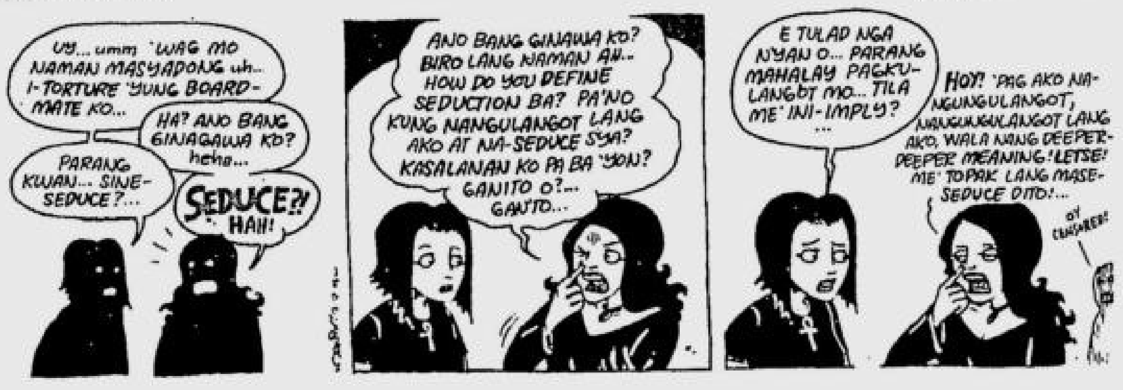
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


RUSTLE RUSTLE
HOW'S THAT?
I DUNNO. LOOKS A BIT CROOKED TO ME.
SHELTON 12-16
AND NOW?

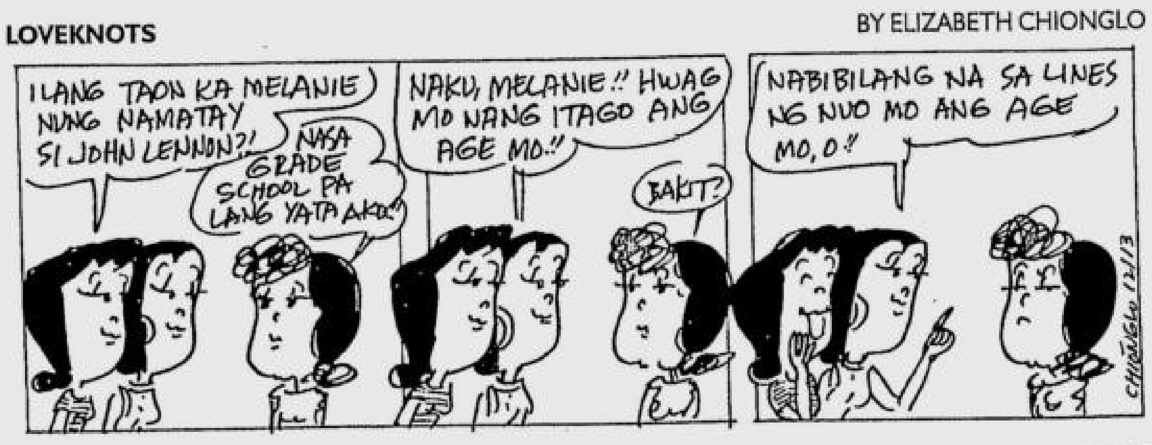
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY... UMM 'WAG MO NAMAN MASYADONG UH... I-TORTURE 'YUNG BOARD-MATE KO...
HA? ANO BANG GINAGAWA KO? heho...
PARANG KWAN... SINE-SEDUCE?...
SEDUCE?! HAH!
ANO BANG GINAWA KO? BIRO LANG NAMAN AH.. HOW DO YOU DEFINE SEDUCTION BA? PA'NO KUNG NANGULANGOT LANG AKO AT NA-SEDUCE SYA? KASALANAN KO PA BA 'YON? GANITO O?... GANTO...
E TULAD NGA NYAN O... PARANG MAHALAY PAGKULANGOT MO... TILA ME' INI-IMPLY?
...
HOY! 'PAG AKO NANGUNGULANGOT, NANGUNGULANGOT LANG AKO, WALA NANG DEEPER-DEEPER MEANING! LETSE! ME' TOPAK LANG MASE-SEDUCE DITO!...

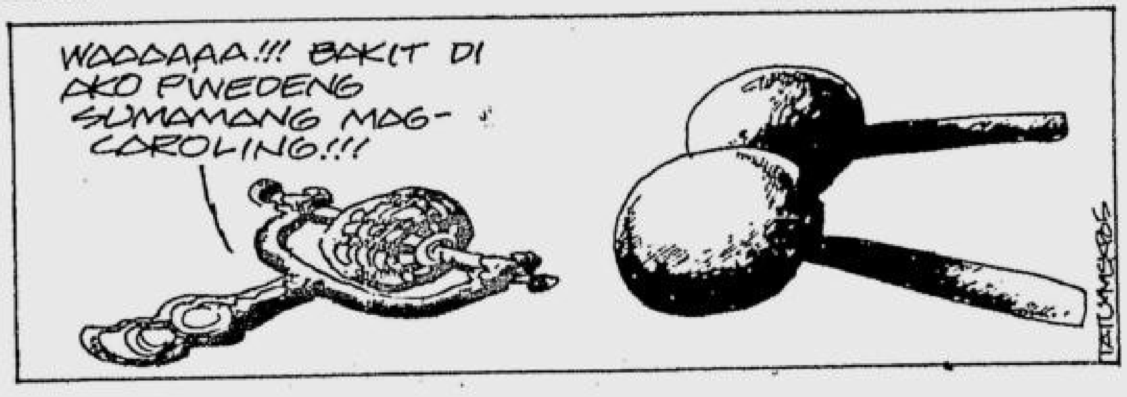
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ILANG TAON KA MELANIE NUNG NAMATAY SI JOHN LENNON?!
NASA GRADE SCHOOL PA LANG YATA AKO.
NAKU, MELANIE!! HWAG MO NANG ITAGO ANG AGE MO.!!
BAKIT?
NABIBILANG NA SA LINES NG NUO MO ANG AGE MO, O!!
CHIONGLO 12/13

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


WAAAAAA!!! BAKIT DI AKO PWEDENG SUMAMANG MAG-CAROLING!!!

One Hope Liwanag vs one Faith Martinez

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

AS PROMISED, I'm giving equal space to the camp of **Plinky Recto** regarding the ordeal that she says she went through when she was still in the clutches of a powerful ex-lover. There are two sides to every story. It's not always easy to tell which is the flip side—or should we say which side has gone flip! It's always sad when the domestic front turns into a battle front. Combative couples like Plinky and her ex should do a Sun Tzu and master the art of winning without fighting.

(We have edited out portions that do not pertain to the case at hand.—Ed)

Hope vs Faith

Dear Dolly,

I subscribe to the INQUIRER and read it everyday. I follow the articles of my favorite columnists, including you. Your column perks up my mornings because of your insightful commentaries that provide glimpses into the entertainment world.

Last Monday's article, more than most, caught my attention. The letter sent by one **Faith Martinez** [was an attack on] Plinky Recto's character. I was aghast by the accusations against Plinky that I, for one, know are complete lies. I am a friend of the Rectos—a decent and respectable family—and I am most especially close to Plinky from way back. I have been with her through thick and thin, the highs and lows of her personal life, and I have seen for myself the ordeals and sufferings she went through with Mr. Gangster.

I write this in defense of her, and in reply to Faith's character assassination. Plinky, I attest to the high heavens, is a good, decent, honest, and compassionate human being. Why she got involved with Mr. Gangster remains a mystery to me. I just tell myself that it was because Plinky believes all human beings are good at heart. At a tremendous personal expense, she turned out to be so very wrong.

I do not mean to burst your bubble but from the text of "her" letter, I think that this Faith Martinez who sent you that letter is none other than Mr. Gangster himself hiding behind the skirt of his so-called pseudo-female alter-ego/informant.

I suppose I cannot blame Mr. Gangster. With so many enemies, it is no wonder that he cannot come out and openly defend himself.

In the face of intimidation and later on offers of money, a person of weak moral fiber would easily give in to Mr. Gangster to support his devious and evil ways. Take a very close look at the maid, the 2 midwives, the driver, and the security guard who are claiming that they have not been bribed or intimidated [to give statements against Plinky]. Court records of Plinky's case would clearly show their utter lack of credibility. If you want, I can convince Plinky to give her written consent as provided under R.A. 9262 so that you can check the court records for yourself. By the way, there is no gag order on Plinky. R.A. 9262 specifically gives her the right to go public as regards her case. So, Faith, I guess you must have been tipped off by a lawyer who does not know his law.

Let's go to Faith's letter point by point.

Like all parents, Plinky is concerned with the well-being of her family—and her family includes the people who work for her. She is a "hands-on" person, an organizer. Plinky may have strict rules about running her household but it is within reason. Plinky has never hit any person, thrown any object at them, or had fits of hysteria. She is firm but diplomatic. She does not reprimand or embarrass any person in public; neither does she make it a public issue. Plinky does not use "kitchen utensils" to discipline her children. She applies a method of child-rearing where the hand is never used to hit a child. According to Plinky, the hand is for loving and caressing.

... in the case of Plinky Recto vs, uh, do we have his name yet?

Plinky alone paid for her Pilates training abroad. I have seen all her receipts to prove this.

Initially Mr. Gangster told Plinky he would "help" set up the studio. But he cannot be trusted; he simply has no word of honor. And to add insult to injury, he keeps a scorecard of his "good deeds," money and gifts he has given, so that he could charge against these favors later. In fact, there was a time when the relationship with Plinky was not going well, he wanted her to reimburse him for his trips to the United States; trips he made at the time that he was wooing her. What a guy!

Plinky's Pilates studio was financed with a bank loan, which she alone has paid. And it's doing very well.

The renovation of Plinky's home came from her savings in the last five years. By the way, the renovation only started August of this year. And the wall, which Faith talked so passionately about, was constructed by Mr. Gangster simply because of his own fight with the squatters across the street. He would threaten them almost every night and even threaten them with a gun. He requested the assistance of the SWAT team to throw tear gas at the squatters which, sadly, caused the death of an old woman in that area.

As to the mauling incident, I am proud of Plinky because she has fought back despite all the bruises and permanent damage to her neck. Prior to 2005, Plinky never had any problems with her neck. Now, she has to take painkillers every day. She had a prescription to wear a neck brace in the early part of the injury. Her medical records will speak for themselves and the attending doctors will attest to the injuries. Are you a doctor, Faith?

To further enlighten your mature readers, Dolly, Mr. Gangster was Plinky's counsel in her annulment case. Privileged information between her as client and himself as her counsel, had been exchanged, including the marital issues that she had at that time with her ex-husband. Your readers may also want to know that Mr. Gangster warned Plinky immediately after the mauling that he would leak lawyer/client information to destroy her reputation. Is it just a coincidence that Faith came to know of these confidentialities?

At any rate, Plinky and her ex-husband are now good friends and happy with their situation. Plinky has her 14-month old son and her ex-husband now has a daughter. By the way, Plinky's ex-husband is not a gangster; how dare Mr. Gangster compare himself to this decent guy!

Faith also appears to know so much about the last four years of the relationship between Plinky and Mr. Gangster, more particularly about the checks he supposedly issued to Plinky. I wonder how Faith came to know of these? Perhaps she also knows that Mr. Gangster was hiding assets from several creditors, including his own family members? Plinky cannot even get back the money he borrowed from her (P750,000 and US$2,500)—and to think he was already living in her house, as in free board and lodging! What a guy!

Now, as to Plinky's former counsels, they made recommendations to her based on R.A. 9262. In a nut shell, the law provides that, as a victim of abuse and violence, Plinky has the legal right to claim actual, moral, and exemplary damages and reimbursement of legal expenses against Mr. Gangster, the total of which, contrary to Faith's story, did not amount to P4 million. I don't know where she got that figure. Plinky was also advised that she has the legal right to claim support for her son with Mr. Gangster, which is not P300,000 a month, again contrary to Faith's report. To digress a little, the Fortun brothers did not turn down Plinky's case. In fact, the complaint filed in court was prepared by one of the brothers. Somewhere along the court proceedings, Plinky and her former counsels decided to part ways for valid reasons, and Plinky is now being ably represented by the Dupaya brothers.

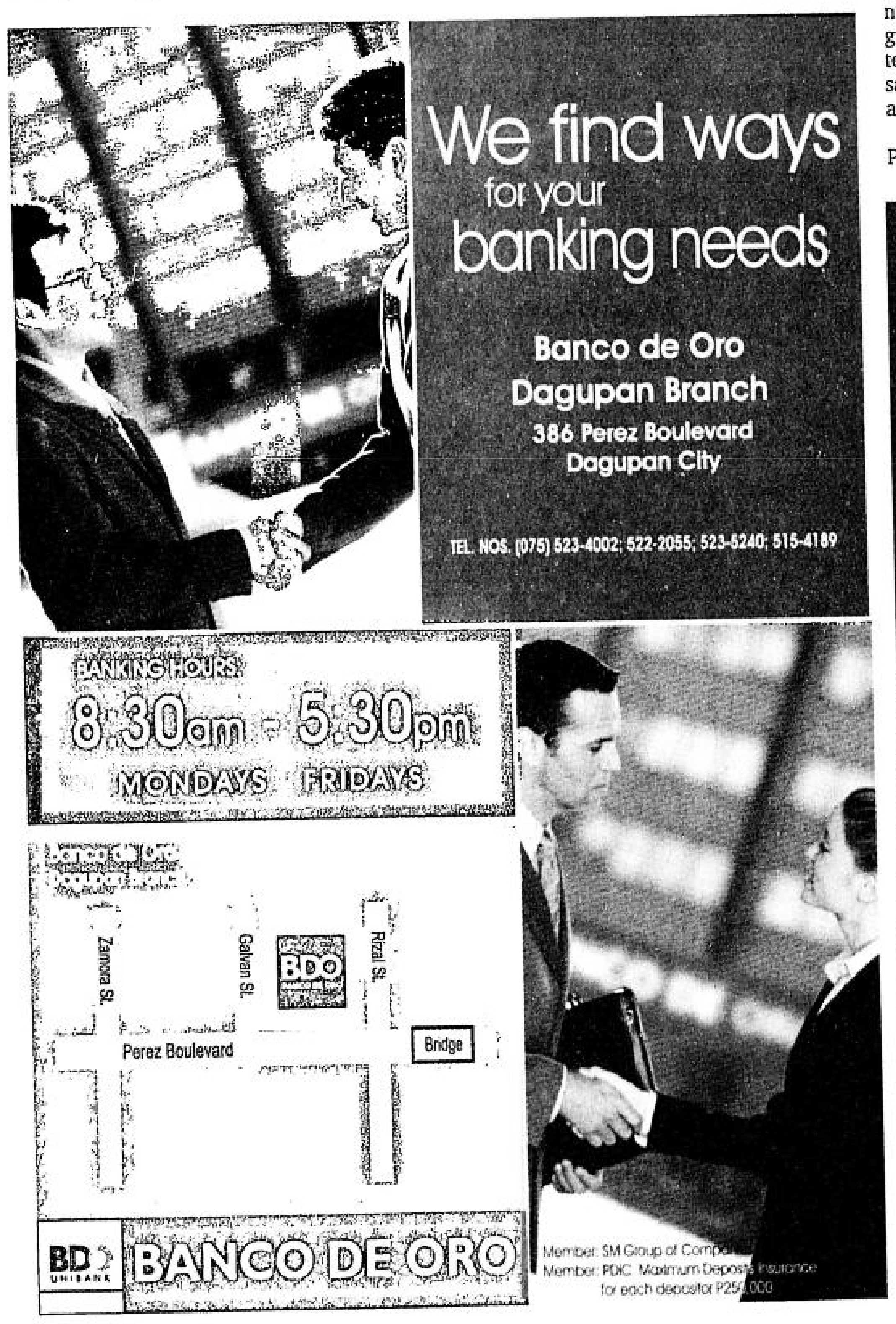
In any event, Plinky has waived the money claims because she cannot have her child begging his father for support, or herself being financially controlled by Mr. Gangster. This can be verified from court records. It is a matter of public knowledge that Plinky has the financial capacity to support her children on her own, and she does not need money from Mr. Gangster.

Right now—and everyone knows this already—Plinky is simply asking the court for a permanent protection order for herself, her two children, and other members of her family and household. Nothing more.

I know that Plinky feels truly blessed and very thankful to have so many supporters—that include me!—despite full knowledge of the dangers we face simply by being with her. Plinky will never be alone in her plight. Her family will never forsake her and will support her more than a 100 per cent through and through, unlike Mr. Gangster who put one over his blood relatives, including his own mother. Shame on you, Faith!

Plinky has thanked—and I'm sure she will always be

ONE/ A2-4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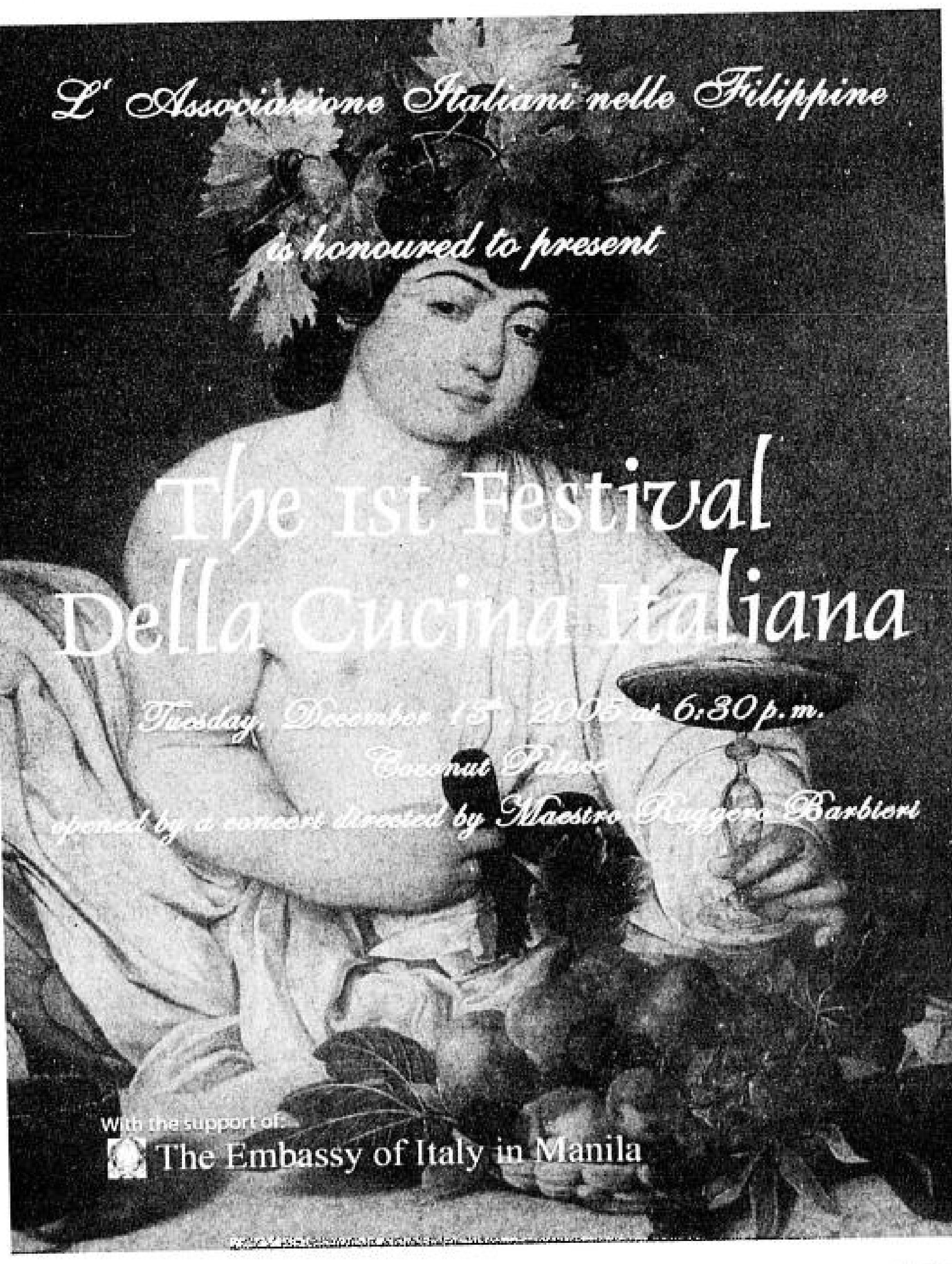
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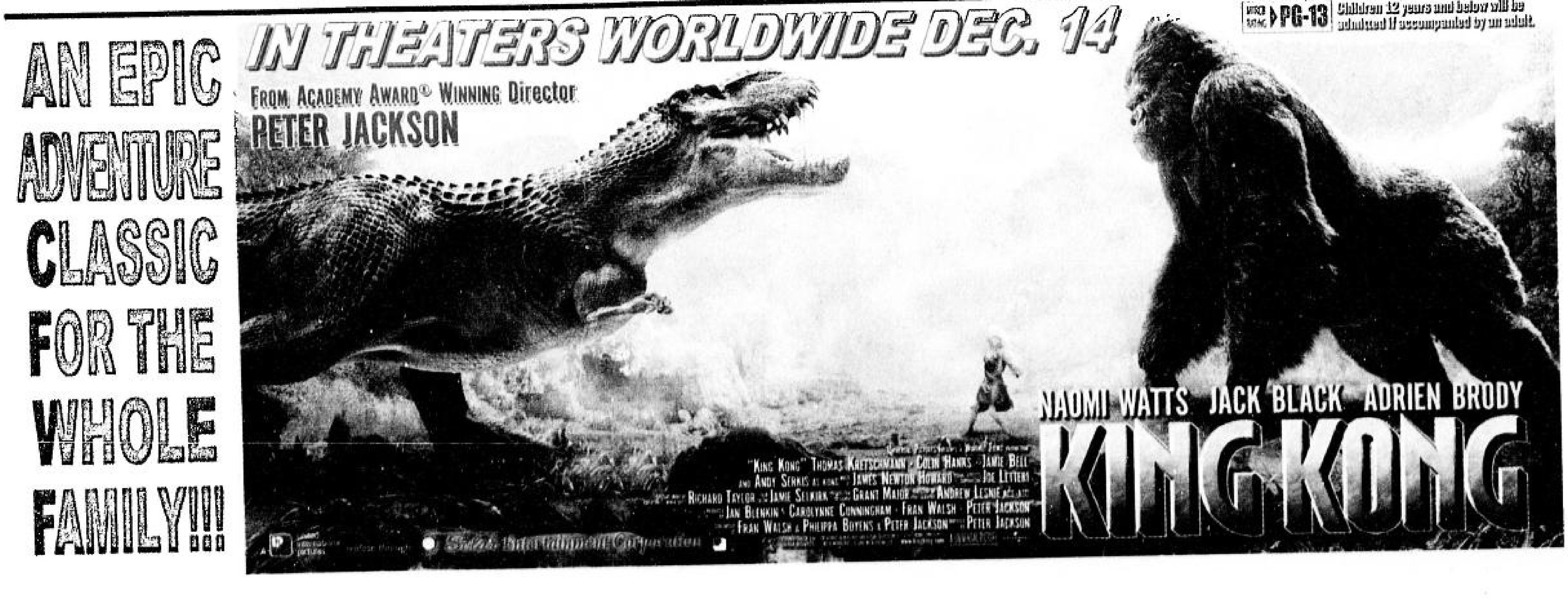
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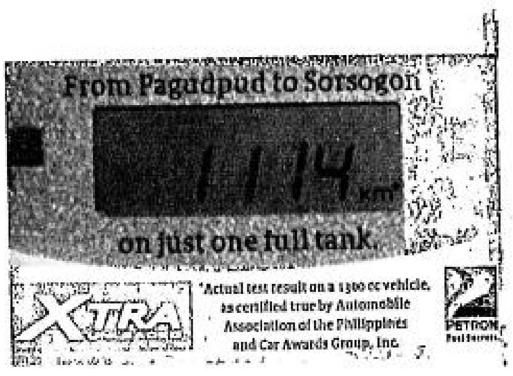
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PETRON

Economy in a downturn, not meltdown–Neda

THE ECONOMY IS IN A TEMporary downturn but is not headed for a meltdown, Economic Planning Secretary Augusto Santos said yesterday.

Gross domestic product (GDP) growth eased to a lower-than-expected 4.1 percent in the three months to September due to high oil prices and anemic agricultural output, endangering the official full-year target of 5.1 percent.

The government later reported that merchandise exports had slipped 3.2 percent in October due to weak global demand for electronics, which account for nearly 70 percent of overseas shipments.

The economy is probably not at the take-off stage "but neither is it, by any stretch of imagination, on the road to meltdown," which implies sustained decline, Santos said in a statement.

He blamed the third-quarter blip on drought, lower government spending as President Macapagal-Arroyo struggled to control Manila's growing debt, and a decline in private sector construction activity.

"The slack, however, is not permanent. The effects of the El Niño (weather pattern) should be gone in the fourth quarter, thereby boosting agriculture," he said.

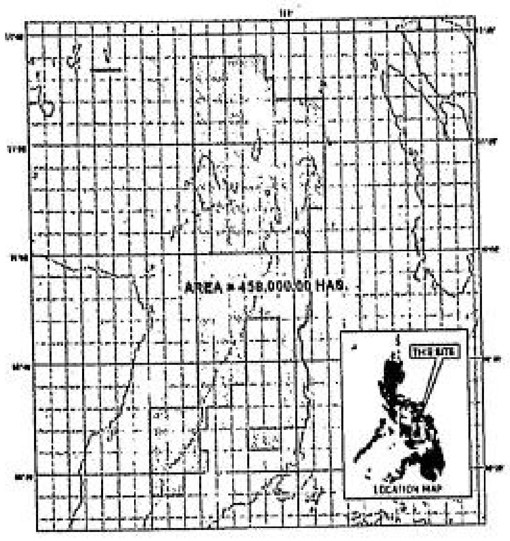
Taking up the slack are record-high cash transfers of Filipinos working abroad, who he said should remit some $10.3 billion to the Philippines this year.

However, private consumption is muted, even as the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic nation approaches the Christmas holidays, the traditional peak season for the manufacturing and retail sectors.

"Families of OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) are not splurging on their remittance income. The consumption growth rate is still 4.8 percent for the third quarter, the same as in the sec-

ECONOMY/ B2

SANTOS



Cebu gas find declared 'commercial'

By Abigail L. Ho

FORUM ENERGY PLC, A JOINT VENTURE between Canada's Forum Energy Corp. and the United Kingdom's Sterling Energy Plc, and the Department of Energy have declared commercial the Libertad gas field in Cebu.

In a statement posted on its official website, Forum Energy said this was the first declaration of commerciality of a gas field within the country since the Camago-Malampaya gas find several years ago.

The Libertad gas field, located 100 kilometers north of Cebu City, is expected to generate up to 2 megawatts (MW) of electricity starting next year, following a $2.5-million development program.

Forum chief executive David Robinson said the firm was in talks with a local power producer on possible gas supply from the Libertad reserves. However, he declined to identify the local firm.

The country currently has three natural gas-fired power plants: the 1,000-MW Sta. Rita and 500-MW San Lorenzo plants of the Lopez family and the 1,200-MW Ilijan plant.

These plants source their natural gas requirements from the Malampaya field in offshore Palawan.

CEBU/ B2

MetroPac seen acquiring NLEX stake in early '06

By Clarissa S. Batino

METRO PACIFIC CORP., THE LOCAL UNIT OF HONG Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., is firming up talks with Australian firm Leighton Asia Ltd. and French firm Egis on the purchase of some of their stakes in the North Luzon Expressway project.

Metro Pacific chair and First Pacific managing director Manuel V. Pangilinan said negotiations with the two groups were proceeding smoothly and Metro Pacific could sign a purchase deal early next year.

"We would like to be a majority owner (of Manila North Tollways Corp.) but for now, we are negotiating with Egis and Leighton to buy part of their stakes," Pangilinan said.

Lopez-owned First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. controls 70 percent of MNTC. The Lopez group earlier said it was selling its stake in MNTC, which drew interest from the local subsidiary of First Pacific.

But now, the Lopezes appeared to have changed their minds in selling even a portion of their NLEX investment, according to Metro Pacific.

Egis owns 13 percent and Leighton Asia Ltd. of Australia another 16.5 percent of MNTC. State-owned Philippine National Construction Corp. has a 2.5-percent equity in the NLEX operator.

Pangilinan said Metro Pacific would also like to increase its investment in the Skyway but the controlling Indonesian group could not decide if it wanted to retain control or sell.

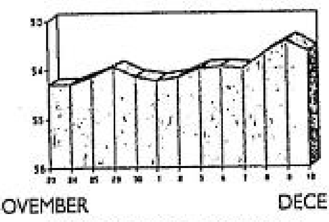
The head of First Pacific said that even before Metro Pacific should offer extending the Skyway from Bicutan to Alabang, the street-level highway must be developed first all the way to Calamba.

"Then the South Luzon Express-

METROPAC / B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 53.65 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 12, 2005

¥ 120.86 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 12, 2005

GOLD: $537.50-538.00
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 12, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares end almost flat

SHARES ENDED ALMOST FLAT yesterday in the absence of market-moving news, with blue chips Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom providing a boost to the index.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 1.15 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,101.40, after shedding 0.6 percent Friday.

SHARES/ B2

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Peso strongest currency in the galaxy. I'm serious

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE INQUIRER's 20th anniversary magazine. On the cover, there are no less than 20 bearbulls, all shapes and sizes. I did not expect such a tribute. The top right hand picture is an exact likeness and was probably taken from my passport photograph.

Here are some strange websites: There is a database for the rich and famous called Who Represents. Its e-mail is whorepresents.com. Then there is a website where experts exchange views on programming. It is expertsexchange.com. If you are looking for a tranquil holiday, go to Pen Island. Email penisland.com. If you need a therapist, try therapistfinder.com. Lastly, we have the Mole Station Nursery based in New South Wales. Write to molestationursery.com.

Here are some comments made by bosses about their employees asking for a reference: I would not allow this employee to breed. He would be out of his depth in a puddle. He sets low personal standards and constantly fails to achieve them. He got into the gene pool when the lifeguard was off duty. Amoebas outscore him in an I.Q. test. Fell out of the family tree. He is so dense that light bends around him. If brains were taxed, he would get a refund. It is hard to believe that he beat out 1 million other sperm. Some drink from the fountain of knowledge. He only gargles.

* * * *

Last week was not very interesting and the Phisix closed unchanged. Gross turnover appeared to be quite high, especially on Friday, when it exceeded P2 billion. But it was just an illusion because cross sales and block sales, which are purely internal transactions not affecting prices, accounted for 75 percent. There was a block sale of 20 million EPCI at P50 worth P1 billion plus cross sales amounting to P583 million, mostly ALI and TEL. Deducting all these crosses, the net turnover was only P500M.

The same thing happened on Tuesday and Thursday. On Tuesday, only a handful of TEL was actually traded, but 342,000 shares were crossed. So in reality the market was rather quiet. Foreign brokers were either small buyers or sellers and, overall, had only a small net position. Local investors backed off fearing evidence from Garci might spark off more political turmoil, but it turned out to be a non-event.

The export figures announced last Friday were disappointing and the market had a modest reaction. Exports, which make up 40 percent of the economy, were down 3.17 percent against a 1-percent decline in the previous month. Electronics make up 67 percent and the news is depressing. While other Asian countries' exports are booming, ours have been dismal. I do not know whether our prices were kept steady in dollar terms but if not, they should be adjusted for a 7-percent inflation. This means that in volume terms, our exports could be down by as much as 10 percent from year ago.

According to Carrier Engineering, the only manufacturers are Matsushita Electronics and themselves. Matsushita, the world's largest manufacturer of consumer electronics, is closing down its losing handsets factory and laying off 1000 workers. Carrier has threatened to relocate to China, where labor and power costs are much lower, if there would be another across-the-board increase in minimum wage here. Not a pretty picture, particularly as power cost will be going up 9 percent next month, and is the highest in Asia except for Japan. I estimate that we will have a trade deficit of P7 billion in 2006.

It is fortunate that we have 7.4 million overseas workers remitting $10 billion this year, and probably $11 billion next year. Without them, we would be in dire straits. Almost all these overseas workers obtained their jobs because of their ability to speak English. Representative Gullas has a bill to revive English as the medium of instruction in schools. Two House committees jointly endorsed the bill for approval. "We should keep our focus on English proficiency, which is our best asset. English is still the language of technology. Our English skills have enabled us to get 30 percent of all IT-enabled service jobs being outsourced from the U.S." I would also include 210,000 English-speaking agents who will be employed in call centers by 2010. Salamat po.

I read that out of every 100 students who started school in grade 1, only 58 go to high school, and 48 graduate. Of these, 75 percent are not fluent either in Filipino or in English, and many can only express themselves in Taglish. This is an appalling admission, and is the result of the government not having enough to spend on education. Overcrowded classrooms, books full of errors, and insufficient and underpaid teachers, who are now going abroad, have brought about this state of affairs. With the new taxes set to bring down the deficit in the years ahead, the government should have more money for health, education and infrastructure.

Saudi Aramco, which owns 40 percent of Petron, wants to build a second refinery in Mindanao to help the country and in particular, the Muslim community. At present, Petron produces 180,000 barrels of oil products a day, and Shell, 110,000. Shell is planning to close its refinery in Batangas by 2008, citing inadequate profit margins. Between them, they produce 78 percent of the country's requirements so that we need to import 22 percent, but if Shell shuts down, this will increase to 53 percent.

Petron is planning to spend $5 billion for a refinery that will be completed by 2010. This will greatly benefit the nation as the by-products can be exported to East Asia and the pacific coast of the US. There is a worldwide shortage of refining capacity, probably a greater problem than the shortage of oil. On a long-term basis, Petron should be a good investment. Over the last 10 years, Petron has earned P22 billion net so it is difficult to understand why Shell is not profitable. I recommended PCOR some time ago at P1.80.

PAL is looking for wide-bodied stewardesses to work in their new wide-bodied Airbuses. *Mrbearbull@hotmail.com.*

MetroPac . . .

From page B1

way must be connected to the STAR (Southern Tagalog Arterial Road). After that, we can go to the second phase of the Skyway," he said.

Metro Pacific president Jose Ma. Lim had said that the $200-million extension of the Skyway could be an attractive project for the joint-venture company that Metro Pacific and Egis were planning to put up.

The Skyway is the 9.3-kilometer elevated highway running from Magallanes to Alabang which can be extended by another six to seven kilometers to Bicutan.

The Skyway project is controlled by Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp., a joint venture of Indonesian firm P.T. Citra Lamtoro Gung Persada and the state-owned PNCC. Metro Pacific has a 10-percent stake in the company and had offered to take control from the Indonesians.

Pangilinan said the government must step in and initiate the development of the country's road network.

"We only have a little over 100 km of developed highway. The government must do something," he said.

The NLEX spans about 80 km while the SLEX is only about 30 km. The Star covers a stretch of 21 km.

Pangilinan had said that the South Luzon highway project would entail three major capital expenditure items—P10 billion to connect the major arterial highways from Alabang to Calamba, then from Calamba to Sta. Rosa, and another P2.5 billion to connect Lipa to the Batangas port.

Economy . . .

From page B1

ond quarter," Santos said.

"Rather, families are saving the money in banks," Santos said.

As such, "we are optimistic that the implied savings will augur well for growth in investment and consumption in 2006," he added.

The official said foreign direct investment jumped 70.5 percent from a year earlier to $929 million in the eight months to August, with portfolio, or financial sector, investment over the past 11 months rising to around two billion dollars, or five times last year's comparative levels.

Fresh mining and construction activity next year should also help, with investment in equipment for mining and construction increasing 59 percent in the nine months to September, Santos said.

AFP

CURRENCIES

December 12, 2005

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.846453	1.000000	53.4990
Japan	Yen	0.007015	0.008287	0.4433
United Kingdom	Pound	1.485610	1.755100	93.8961
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.109160	0.128962	6.8993
Switzerland	Franc	0.649868	0.767754	41.0741
Canada	Dollar	0.731910	0.864678	46.2594
Singapore	Dollar	0.503212	0.594495	31.8049
Australia	Dollar	0.636049	0.751428	40.2006
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.245770	2.653153	141.9410
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.225721	0.266667	14.2664
Brunei	Dollar	0.501721	0.592733	31.7106
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000087	0.000103	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.020520	0.024242	1.2969
UAE	Dirham	0.230466	0.272272	14.5663
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.181400	63.2037
Argentina	Peso	0.282386	0.333611	17.8479
Brazil	Real	0.377712	0.446229	23.8728
Denmark	Kroner	0.134242	0.158594	8.4846
India	Rupee	0.018357	0.021687	1.1602
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.224553	0.265287	14.1926
Mexico	New Peso	0.079557	0.093989	5.0283
New Zealand	Dollar	0.595297	0.703284	37.6250
South Africa	Rand	0.132965	0.157085	8.4039
Korea	Won	0.000819	0.000967	0.0517
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025296	0.029885	1.5988

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 12, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	32.5	33	32.5	32.5	1,377,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	58	57	57	1,030,200
China Banking Corp.	605	605	605	605	240
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	200
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	300,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	55.5	55.5	53.5	54.5	74,500
International Exch. Bank	21.25	21.25	21.25	21.25	1,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33	33.5	33	33	200,300
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32	32	14,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	9,400
Security Bank Corp.	33	33	33	33	25,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	31	31	30.5	30.5	5,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	40,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3105	3110	3105	3110	160
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2110	2110	2110	290
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14	14.25	14	14	16,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.89	0.91	2,320,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	745	750	745	745	145,170
Ipeople Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.75	2.75	280,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.047	3,900,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.45	3.55	3.45	3.55	1,202,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1770	1790	1770	1790	95,320
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	10,000,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	40,800
Manila Electric Co. B	24.5	24.5	24.25	24.25	64,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	1,998,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.5	1,367,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	21,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	160,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	235,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	200,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	57,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	400,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	6,276,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	22.5	22.75	22.5	22.75	27,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43	43.5	43	43.5	69,800
Pancake House Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	10,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63.5	64	70,800
San Miguel Corp. B	86	87.5	86	86	102,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.25	25,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	330	332.5	330	330	694,750
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.45	670,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.75	4.8	4.75	4.75	105,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	3,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	15,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	25,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	10,306,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	40,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	110,000
CADP Group Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	20,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	1,140,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	272,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	49	49	48	48	164,100
House Of Investments Inc.	1	1	1	1	140,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	168,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.54	1.58	370,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	1,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	658,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	3,610,000
Paxys Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	91,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	205,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	60,000
SM Investments Corp.	248	250	248	250	11,290
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.125	0.12	0.125	850,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	4,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	20,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1	1	0.98	0.99	4,449,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	372,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.9	2.9	2.75	2.9	136,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	5,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	14	14	14	14	304,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.9	10	9.8	9.9	8,006,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	248,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,410,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	1,047,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	160,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	260,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	136,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	150,000
SM Development Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	132,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	9,447,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	10,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	140,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	27,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	413,000
Benguet Corp. B	30	30	30	30	7,400
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	15,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.215	0.215	2,320,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.25	6,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.021	0.019	0.021	267,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.031	0.029	0.031	465,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	1,601,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.72	1.74	1.72	1.74	2,638,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	27.5	28	174,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	27,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	100,000
Pacifica	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	5,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.7	3.7	53,000

Shares . . .

From page B1

Decliners led gainers 47 to 20, while 45 stocks were unchanged.

"What accounted for the weakness in the market? Well, for one, nothing came out over weekend. There were no fresh leads," said PCCI Securities president Francisco Liboro. "But I think the market will go up this week. Technically, the market is building up momentum."

Providing some boost to the index were telecommunications blue chips PLDT, which rose 0.9 percent to P1,790, and Globe Telecom, up 0.7 percent at P745.

Decliners included the Bank of the Philippine Islands, which lost 0.9 percent to P57; First Holdings, down 2 percent to P48, and Petron, off 1.1 percent at P4.50.

AP

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Comments and suggestions to the Proposed PSE SBL and Short Selling Rules can be directed to jgbautista@pse.com.ph or through the:

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE, INC.
Philippine Stock Exchange Centre
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center
Pasig City, Metro Manila 1605
Telephone No. 688-7600.

Please forward comments and suggestions not later than **January 10, 2006.**

Cebu gas . . .

From page B1

The Libertad gas field lies within Service Contract 40, in which Forum holds a 66.7-percent stake.

The service contract likewise contains the onshore Maya oil and gas find, as well as prospects on Jibitnil Island and offshore in the Tanon Strait.

The company said that as these prospects could be found near existing infrastructure networks, they had a lot of potential for commercial development.

Forum also sees production of high-quality steam coal from its coal properties within the first half of next year. The company has two coal operating contracts in Central and Southern Cebu with proven and probable reserves of 4.9 million tons.

In line with its efforts to tap yet unexploited resources, the firm completed in August a key 3D seismic survey across the Sampaguita gas discovery to determine the commercial potential of the gas find.

Forum said that the analysis of the survey results would not only provide the company with more information on the commercial potential of the gas find, but would also aid it in identifying the best location for a possible appraisal well to be drilled next year.

According to a recent independent assessment by petroleum consultants PGS Reservoir Ltd., the Sampaguita gas field has estimated potential recoverable gas reserves of up to 2.3 trillion cubic feet.

The Sampaguita gas find is only 250 km southwest of the Malampaya gas find.

ALI sells stake in land leasing firm

Move forms part of efforts to maximize asset productivity

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA LAND INC. SOLD ITS ENTIRE STAKE in a property unit involved in carpark operations to the Zuellig Group for P900 million.

This is ALI's second deal with the pharmaceutical company.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), ALI sold its entire stake in Bridgebury Realty Corp., a company engaged in the business of leasing land for carpark operations, equivalent to 8.84 million shares, to Mercator Securities Corp. (MSC) of the Zuellig Group.

One of Bridgebury assets is the 3,700-square-meter carpark at "The Atrium" along Makati Ave., Makati City.

For the payment of the Bridgebury shares,

Zuellig issued to ALI a promissory note worth P900 million. The note is payable on Dec. 29, 2009.

Earlier, ALI swapped its shares in Oxbury Realty Corp., a company engaged in the leasing of a 4,600-sq.m. lot along Makati Avenue, for a 1.2-hectare Zuellig-owned property on Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. (Buendia Ave.) and Malugay St.

ALI said the sale was in line with its" efforts to maximize asset productivity as one of several initiatives to improve shareholder value."

The sale of non-core assets, which include investments and receivables, is being undertaken to optimize asset use and lighten the company's asset base. Cash generated from asset sales enabled the company to increase dividend payout, make additional investments and pare down debts.

Sources said ALI might use the lot it acquired from Zuellig for residential projects similar to "Serendra" or "The Columns" under Community Innovations Inc. (CII), a newly formed subsidiary focusing on serving the property needs and aspirations of young families, upcoming professionals and entrepreneurs.

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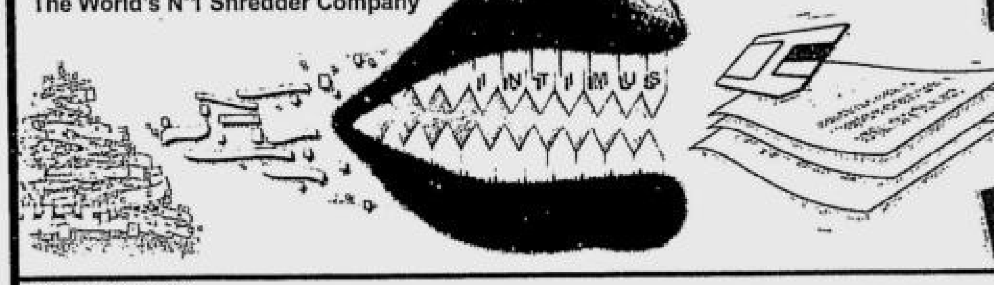

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Innova 2.0 G M/T	930,000	100,000	71,687	49,366	39,341	28,074	22,653	19,550
Innova 2.5 E M/T	885,000	100,000	67,636	46,576	37,121	26,489	21,374	18,454
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National Power Corporation
Republic of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply and Delivery of Imported Steaming Coal to Sual CFTPP Batch II, CY 2006

1. The National Power Corporation now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the above supply.
2. It intends to apply the sum as shown below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), inclusive of maximum loading tolerance:

Batch II Schedule-Plant	Volume, MT	Approved Budget for the Contract Inclusive of Maximum Loading Tolerance, Php	Bidding Date, Venue and time
1-SCFTPP (Regular/Lot)	5 lots of 1x65,000 +/-7%	264,846,400/Lot	Dec. 28, 2005 Pahiyas – 9:30 A.M.

Note: This cancels the previous invitation for the same supply of Sual CFTPP (Spot/Regular), Batch II, Sch. 1 published on November 4 & November 11, 2005.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the IRR-Part A of RA 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, Organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (RA 5183). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased from BCSD upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P20,000.00 per mine source per schedule, either in cash or manager's check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. Pre-Bid Conference shall be on Dec. 14. 2005, 9:00 A.M. at Peñafrancia Function Room for Batch II, NPC, Diliman, Q.C.
6. Bidders are encouraged to submit Eligibility Documents on or before Dec. 16, 2005 for evaluation and issuance of Class A certification.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at designated venue on the bidding dates. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount stated in the Tender Document. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders. Any inquiry regarding the above invitation shall be addressed to the undersigned.
9. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Bids and Contracts Services Department (BCSD), NPC Building, Diliman, Quezon City at Tel. No. 922-1622 or visit NPC (www.napocor.gov.ph) and DBM (www.procurementservice.net.com) websites.

(Sgd.) SILVANO C. ZANORIA
Sr. Vice President and
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 6 & 13, 2005)

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NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Petron Corp. Stock Certificates 0035542, 00647010, 01177364 and 01396542 representing 3018 shares and issued from 1994 to 1997 In the name of Francisco Alcuaz Jr. were lost. If no contest received, new certificates will be issued (PDI-November 29, Dec. 6 & 13, 2005)

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region – IX Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 9911828, (062) 9850884, Fax No. (062) 9911339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested Trucking/Hauling Operators, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the trucking/hauling of the 2006 NFA imported/local rice and/or palay at the following areas:

Province	Estimated Volume (In bags of 50 kgs.)	Approved Rate per Bag of 50 kgs.	Approved Budget
Zambo. City Port to NFA Whse.	880,000	4.50	3,960,000.00
Pagadian Port to Tiguma Whse.	105,000	6.00	630,000.00
Pagadian Port to Culo Whse.	45,000	20.00	900,000.00
Palid, Z.S. Port to Ipil ZS. Whse	60,000	6.00	360,000.00
Malangas Port to Guilawa Whse.	20,000	6.25	125,000.00
Pulauan Port to Gulayon Whse.	117,000	8.50	994,500.00
Lamao Wharf to Banigan Whse.	45,000	4.75	213,750.00
Gulayon Whse. to S. Osmeña Whse	17,000	16.50	280,500.00
Sta. Maria Wharf to Siocon Whse.	18,000	8.00	144,000.00
TOTAL	1,307,000		7,607,750.00

All trucking/hauling operators interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a nonrefundable fee Php 5,000.00 to the NFA in Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated below.

Prospective bidders should have the experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use nondiscretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contraact shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Schedule if bidding activities:

> Last Day of Application for Registration/renewal of interested bidders who are not NFA accredited trucking/hauling operators or with expired registration	December 15, 2005 / 8:00AM-4:00PM
> Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & Issuance of Bid forms	December 8-9; 14-16, 2005
> Pre-Bid Conference*	December 21, 2005 / 2: 00 PM
> **Opening of Bids***	**January 6, 2006 / 2:00 PM**
> Bid Evaluation	January 7-11, 2006
> Post-Qualification	January 12-16, 2006
> Notice of Award	January 23, 2006

* Venue will be at the NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zambo. City.

The National Food Authority assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA
OIC – Office of the ARM, and
Chairman, NFA-IX BAC

(PDI - Dec. 6 & 13, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region - IX Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 9911828, (062) 9850884, Fax No. (062) 9911339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested shipping companies/ship owners/operators who are registered/licensed with MARINA, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hiring of vessels for voyage charter in the dispersal of the 2006 NFA stocks from the Zamboanga City Port to other Provincial Ports of Region IX and the ARMM provinces, particulars as follows:

Destination/Port	Est. Volume (In bags of 50 kgs.)	Vessel Capacity	Approved Rate/Bag of 50 kgs.	Approved Budget
Pulauan Port, Dapitan City	117,000	10,000-30,000	21.00	2,457,000.00
Lamao Port, Liloy, ZDN	45,000	5,000-15,000	20.00	900,000.00
Sta. Maria Port, Siocon	18,000	5,000-10,000	16.00	288,000.00
Palid Port, Ipil Z. Sibugay	60,000	8,000-20,000	18.00	1,080,000.00
Malangas Port, Z. Sibugay	20,000	8,000-20,000	19.00	380,000.00
Pagadian Port, Zambo. Sur	150,000	10,000-30,000	20.00	3,000,000.00
Isabela Port, Basilan	160,000	5,000-30,000	12.00	1,920,000.00
Jolo Port, Sulu	30,000	8,000-20,000	18.00	540,000.00
Bongao Port, Tawi-Tawi	30,000	8,000-20,000	27.50	825,000.00
TOTAL				11,390,000.00

All shipping operators interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00 to the NFA in Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated below.

Prospective bidders should have the experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use nondiscretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security. Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR.).

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date and Time
> Last Day of Application for Registration/renewal of interested bidders who are not NFA accredited shipping operators or with expired registration	December 16, 2005 / 8:00AM-4:00 PM
> Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & Issuance of Bid forms	December 8-9; 14-16, 2005
> Pre-Bid Conference*	December 22, 2005 / 2:00 P.M.
> **Opening of Bids***	**January 9, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.**
> Bid Evaluation	January 7-11, 2006
> Post-Qualification	January 12-16, 2006
> Notice of Award	January 23, 2006

* Venue will be at the NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zambo. City.

The National Food Authority assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA**
OIC-Office of the ARM, and
Chairman, NFA-IX BAC

(PDI--Dec. 6 & 13, 2005)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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CEP seminar for 2006

REAL ESTATE BROKERS ASSOCIATION of the Philippines, Inc. (Rebap) Mandaluyong Chapter headed by its, president Julius G. Topacio will hold a Continuing Education Program (CEP) seminar for those Real Estate Brokers who will renew their respective licenses beginning next year.

Topics covering the 20units CEP Seminar requirement are accredited by DTI-BTRCP are the following: Real Estate Taxation, Estate Tax and Donor Tax, Documentation and Registration, Basic Appraisal for Real Estate, Site Location and Map Reading, Joint Venture, Real Estate Expropriation, Real Estate Finance and Investment Analysis & Property Management. Lecturer are CRB Cesar Santos, licensed Broker, Appraiser and Consultant and Engr. Enrico Cruz, President of Urbran Institute of Real Estate.

Certificate of completion will be issued for those who will complete the seminar. Scheduled date: Dec. 14 and 15 from 8-5p.m. at Rebap Mandaluyong Office, Training Room, 409 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City. Please Call Jaime Correces, VP for Internal Affairs at 0918-3381323/0927-5749734, Michelle at 727-6915/ 727 -0701 loc. 123 for reservation and registration

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OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
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"I go and prepare a place for you... I am coming again and will take you to myself, that where I am, there also you may be." (John 14:2-3)

ANTONIO M. EJERCITO

May 5, 1932 - December 11, 2005

passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord, at the age of 73, in the morning of Sunday, December 11, at the San Juan Medical Center.

Tony's beloved mother, **Maria Marcelo Vda.** de Emilio Ejercito Sr., his sisters and brothers, Pilarica, Emilio, Jr. (Toty) †, Paulino (Paulie), Maria Patrocinio (Pat), Maria Consejo (Connie) †, Marita, **President Joseph E. Estrada**, Jorge (George) †, Jesus (Jesse), sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews and other relatives request for your prayers for his eternal peace.

He lies in state at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills. Interment will be on Friday, December 16, at the San Juan Municipal Cemetery, after the 10:00 a.m. Requiem Mass at Santuario de San Jose.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the San Juan Medical Center for the benefit of the indigent patients will be highly appreciated.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
Tel. Nos. Q.C.: 712-3001 • 743-6502
Manila – 711-6931 to 35

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION DATE & TIME	INTERMENT/CREMATION PLACE
Pascual Magsalin	Chapel A, Q.C.	12/13/05; 2:00 p.m.	San Roque Chapel, Q.C.
Dr. Manuel T. Coses, Ph.D.	Imperial Chapel, Q.C	12/15/05; after the 10:00 a.m. Mass	Agoo Cemetery
Rosauro G. Garcia, Sr.	Chapel 15, Q.C	12/15/05; 9:30 a.m.	Holy Cross Mem. Park

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Elysium Gardens Columbarium now ready for use

ELYSIUM GARDENS Columbarium a modern /classical columbarium which is conveniently located at 277 E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City, within the Cathedral Heights compound bounded by Trinity College of Quezon City and St. Lukes Medical Center would like to announce that its construction is now 85% completed and is now ready for use.

It offers indoor and outdoor garden vaults made out of Italian Marble and travertine stones, in a serene garden setting. Please call our Marketing Office at 723-6494 / 723-7651 / 723-6335.

ROLANDO I. PENDON

Retiree of United Laboratories, Inc.

Peacefully joined his Creator
on December 11, 2005
at the age of 60.

His body lies in state
at 23 San Pablo St., Bo. Kapitolyo,
Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

"A rare and great light has gone out, but one that has made all others shine brighter."

BIENVENIDA CRUCILLO BOLIVAR

of Tiwi, Albay and Magarao, Camarines Sur

★ March 22, 1925 † December 9, 2005

Her body lies in state at the Marian Memorial Chapels, Mariano Marcos Ave., Antipolo City. Cremation is on December 15 at 5 p.m. at Loyola Memorial Crematorium, Marikina City.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

Jesus Maria "Jess" de Jesus Romillo

December 16, 1955 – December 10, 2005

His parents, **Eugenio V.** (†) and **Ma. Corazon "Corrie" de Jesus Romillo**; siblings, in-laws, nieces and nephews:

- **Ma. Victoria** and Dr. Luisito Dingcong, Patricia, Elizabeth and Lorenzo
- **Archie** and Agnes Azares, Nikolai, Miguel, Gabriel and Rafael
- **Atty. Rosemarie** and Isabel
- **Jose "Butch"** and Ma. Meliza Cabato, John, Mariza and Alfonso
- **Renato** and Shella Asinas
- **Raul** and Cindy Salonga, Joacquin
- **Raymund** and Maricel Faylon, Lorenzo Joaquin and Angelo Joaquin

mourn his passing and request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the new building of La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

His body will be transferred to Loved Flock Catholic Ministry, 1258 Quezon Ave., Quezon City after 2pm. Interment will be on Wednesday, December 14, 2005, at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loved Flock.

BENILDO O. ANGELES

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on December 11, 2005 at the age of 73.*

He is survived by his bereaved wife **NELLIE**; children **PAULINE & ARNOLD**; grandchildren **ANGELICA, JEANELLE & KEVIN**; sisters **ROSE, DIDING, CHIT, CORA, BABY** & brothers **RIC & EDDIE**

His remains lie in state at Arlington Funeral Homes, Araneta Avenue, Q.C.
Cremation rites shall be on December 14, 2005 at Funeraria Paz Araneta Avenue at 8:00am.

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we design obituaries for free

DALMACIO C. RUBIO

of San Juan, Hagonoy, Bulacan

*Peacefully joined his Creator
on 11 December 2005
at the age of 78.*

His body lies at the Don Bosco Chapel, Makati. Interment will be on Wednesday, December 14, 2005 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 1:00 pm Mass.

ENGR. AMADO SALAPONG MANAHAN

(September 13, 1925 – December 11, 2005)

His bereaved wife **Francisca A.**; children **Frances, Jerome, Marietta, Carmen, Manuel & Louie**; grandchildren **Alan, Pia, Enrae, Patrick, Derick, Jerick, Jack, James, John, Joanna, Leslie & Lawrence**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Bulacan Chapel, Sta. Ana, Bulacan.

Interment will be tomorrow, Dec. 14, 2005, 2:30 p.m. at Bulacan Cemetery. Mass is at 2 p.m. at Assumption Church, Bulacan, Bulacan.

Moody's seen to be in no mood to boost RP rating

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S EFFORT TO BOOST TAX administration and collection efficiency apparently has failed to make a dent on Moody's Investor Service, Finance Secretary Gary Teves yesterday said.

Teves told reporters that he could not say whether Moody's, which was in Manila for a credit rating assessment last week, would lift its rating outlook on the Philippines.

"I don't know the mood of Moody's," Teves said. "They have not conveyed any message that I can determine ... During our talks, they said they were concerned about the collection of EVAT, and improving tax administration and collection efficiency."

Last February, the US-based credit rating firm slashed the Philippines' sovereign credit ratings by two notches to B1 from Ba2, warning of heightened vulnerability to economic, financial and political shocks due to ballooning public debts.

With Moody's, the country's sovereign debt rating now stands four notches below the much-coveted investment grade.

According to Moody's, bonds that are rated B "generally lack characteristics of the desirable investment, while assurance of interest and principal payments or maintenance of other terms of the contract over any long period of time may be small."

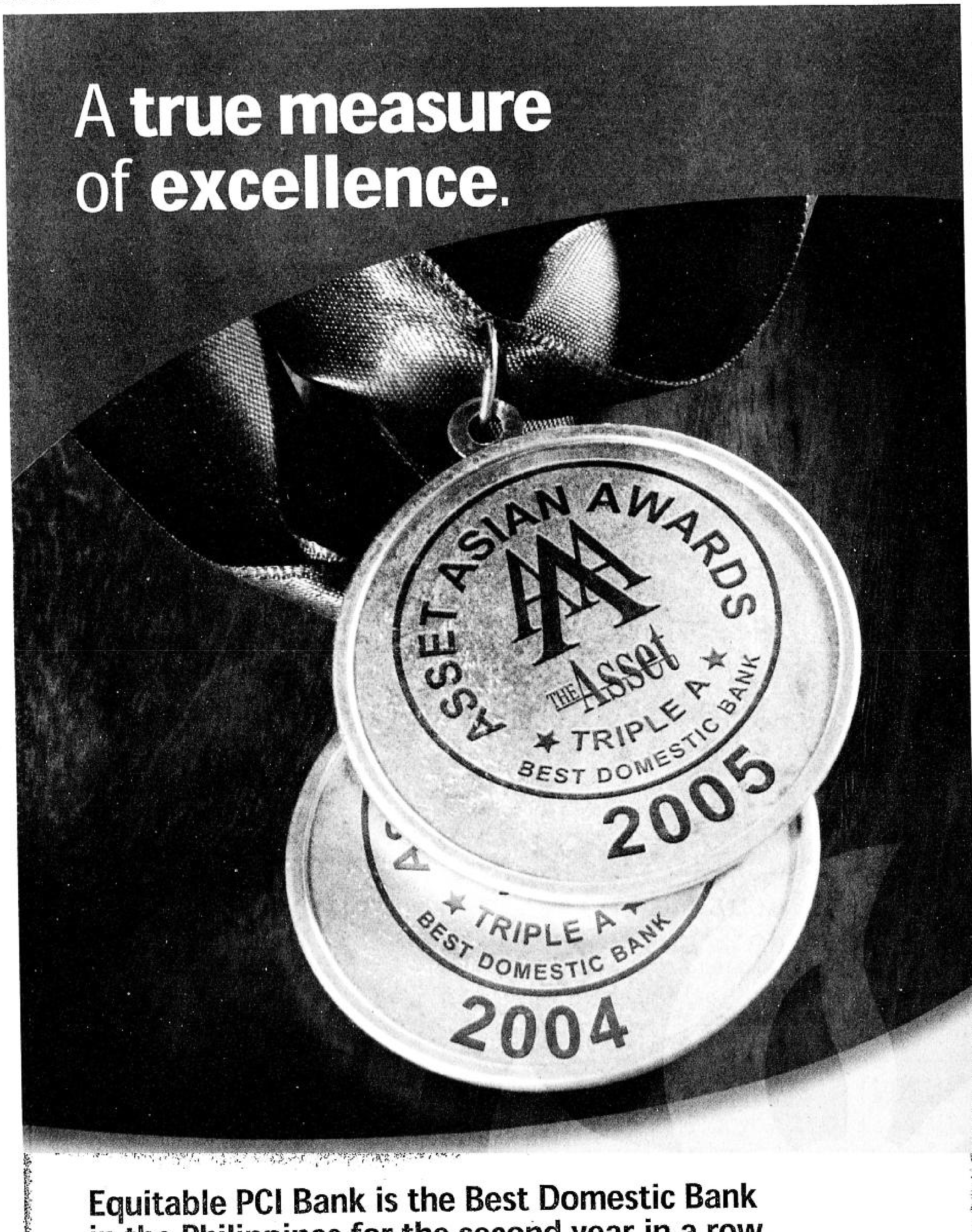
Moody's, the most pessimistic among the three global rating agencies, also changed to "negative" from "stable" the outlook on Philippine government bond ratings last July, when key economic managers quit the Cabinet and the EVAT was suspended.

Meanwhile, Teves said a slowdown in the economy would also hurt government revenues, as every 1 percentage drop in gross domestic product would result in P6 billion worth of foregone revenues.

The National Economic and Development Authority had projected that GDP would grow by only about 5 percent this year. Teves said the government would have to find alternative ways to raise P6 billion.

But he noted that, for this year, the government would maintain its cash budget deficit target of P125 billion.

A WORKER hauls in seaweed in Mindanao. Gelatin applications have recently taken the backseat to seaweed. The aquaculture product is expected to corner the lion's share of the $8-billion world gelatin market.



Equitable PCI Bank is the Best Domestic Bank in the Philippines for the second year in a row.

Hong Kong-based The Asset, one of Asia's leading regional finance publications, has again named Equitable PCI Bank as "The Best Domestic Bank in the Philippines for 2005" in The Asset Triple A Country Awards.

After an extensive qualitative and quantitative rating of the Bank's performance, Equitable PCI Bank was recognized for its excellence in the financial services industry in the country.

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Seaweed to top aquaculture trade in '06

By Christine A. Gaylican

CARRAGEENAN AND OTHER SEAWEED products are expected to become the export leaders in the country's $700-million aquaculture industry next year.

"The Philippines is still the top exporter of high grade carrageenan in the world," said Ramon M. Macaraig, president of the Chamber of Aquaculture and Ancillary Industries in Saranggani. "Seaweed exports may even overtake the shrimp trade as the (aquaculture industry's) top dollar earner for the country."

The Philippines accounts for $50 million of the $80-million US market, Macaraig said during the recent National Aquaculture Congress.

"What we have to solve is the raw material supply problem," said exporter Benson Dakay, whose company exports the biggest volume of refined and semi-refined carrageenan from the Philippines

According to Dakay, abnormal weather patterns have affected the production of Eucheuma denticulatum, the primary source of Philippine-produced carrageenan.

Dakay's firm, Shemberg Corp., is the biggest producer of carrageenan in Asia and the third largest in the world, with 2,000 direct employees and about 35,000 seaweed farmer-suppliers.

There has been a growing demand for semi-processed seaweed exports—with applications in food, cosmetics, and medicine. Seaweed exporters recently decided to increase the cost of their products.

Globe posts ₱300-M bond for 3G bands

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE TELECOM INC. HAS POSTED A P300-million performance bond with the National Telecommunications Commission to complete its application for the third-generation, or 3G, frequency bands that will allow it to offer more advanced mobile services.

Globe senior vice president and head of regulatory affairs Rodolfo Salalima said the joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom would usher in a 3G revolution in the Philippines similar to what it had done more than 10 years ago when it pioneered the digital wireless service.

The NTC, Salalima said, must award Globe the 3G radio frequencies it was requesting so it could launch its 3G operations. The performance bond is a form of a guarantee from Globe that it will complete its roll out commitment for 3G.

"The needed frequency will be critical to our success in maintaining and delivering state-of-the-art mobile services while pushing the envelope of more advanced cellular technology in the Philippines," Salalima said.

Globe claimed it was best qualified for 3G operations among the applicants. It has the technical expertise and the financial strength to put up the infrastructure and deliver the new services.

Aside from Globe, Smart Communications Inc. is also serious in pursuing 3G. Its president Napoleon Nazareno said Smart will spend about $60 million in the first two years of operating 3G.

Digitel Mobile Phils. Inc., Bayan Telecommunications Inc., and smaller players—such as trunk radio operator Next Mobile Inc., AZ Communications Inc. linked to Antonio Cojuangco, Connectivity Unlimited Resources Inc. of Roberto Ongpin, Multi-Media Telephony Inc. formerly controlled by Jose de Venecia III and now linked to Enrique Razon and Pacific Wireless Inc., with links to a Malaysian group—are all applying for 3G frequencies.

The NTC said it would award five 3G frequencies early next year to qualified players.

3G will make possible high speed data, voice, and video services where it can transfer data at a speed of 384 kbps to 2mbps against the current technology's maximum speed of 9.6 kbps.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

Re-Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Provision of Insurance Packages to NFA Employees for year 2006

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY*, through its *2006 Corporate Operating Budget* intends to apply the sum of *P21,122,469.50* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *the provision of Insurance Packages to NFA Employees for year 2006*, as follows:

Lot	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Particulars
1	Group Hospitalization Insurance Program	14,000,000.00
2	Executive Health Care Program	1,100,000.00
3	Group Accident Insurance Program	1,307,059.50
4	Group Term Life Insurance	4,715,410.00
	TOTAL	21,122,469.50

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the *provision of Insurance Packages to NFA Employees for year 2006*. Period of coverage is January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **Instruction to Bidders (ITB).**

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY-BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P5,000.00. The method of payment will be *CASH*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

Prospective bidders who secured the bidding documents for the failed bidding of December 2, 2005 are no longer required to pay anew the non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 for the bid documents.

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY* will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *December 13, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.*** at the *NFA Boardroom, 10th floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.*

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the *NFA Boardroom, 10th floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City* on December 27, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.. Late Bids shall not be accepted. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in either of the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bid opening shall be on *December 27, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.* at the *NFA Boardroom, 10th floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procuring Entity – *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY*
Contact Persons – *Jose D. Chua / Violeta S. Villarama*
Address – *101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City*
Telephone No. – *(632) 712-3341 loc. 8923 or 8520*
e-mail address – *vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph*
Fax No. – *(632) 712-0454*
Website – *www.nfa.gov.ph*

(Sgd.) **PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.**
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair
for Administration and General Support Services

(PDI – December 6 & 13, 2005)

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio
Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines
Telephone 8931320 ext. 5179 Fax 8401461

PNOC
The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites prospective Partners to apply for eligibility and, if subsequently found eligible, to bid for the project:

MINERAL EXPLORATION/ASSESSMENT WORK IN THE ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY EXPLORATION PERMIT AREA UNDER EXPLORATION PERMIT NO. EXP - 002 - 97- IX - SECOND RENEWAL
(EDC 05-174-1)

Prospective partners must meet these criteria:

1. Any Filipino citizen of legal age and with capacity to contract; or a corporation, partnership, association or cooperative organized or authorized for the purpose of engaging in mining with technical and financial capability to undertake mineral resources development and duly registered in accordance with law at least sixty percent (60%) of the capital of which is owned by Filipino citizens; provided, that a legally organized foreign-owned corporation (i.e. any corporation, partnership, association or cooperative duly registered in accordance with law in which less than fifty percent (50%) of the capital is owned by Filipino citizens) shall also be deemed eligible;
2. With a minimum authorized capital stock of Ten Million Philippine Pesos (PhP 10,000,000.00) and a minimum paid-up capital of Two Million Five Hundred Thousand Philippine Pesos (PhP 2,500,000.00);
3. With at least two (2) geologists having a minimum of five-year professional experience. The submission of curricula vitae and track records in mining operations and environmental management of the technical personnel who shall undertake the activities in the submitted Work Program shall be strictly required as a mandatory requirement; and
4. In case of a corporation, must declare and show proof that it is already a holder of an Exploration Permit (EP), Mineral Agreement (MA) or Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA).

The compliance of a corporation to criterion # 4 shall automatically establish its eligibility to bid for the subject project.

The Eligibility Documents shall be available for issuance to interested parties starting December 13, 2005 from the PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat [c/o Francis T. Tolibas (loc. 5179)] upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Philippine Peso Five Hundred (PhP 500.00), or US Dollar Ten (US$ 10.00) in case of foreign bidders to defray courier expenses. The Bidding Documents shall be issued to eligible bidders on January 6, 2006 10:00 A.M. by the PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat [c/o F. T. Tolibas (loc. 5179)] upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Philippine Peso Five Thousand (PhP 5,000.00), or US Dollar One Hundred Thirty (US$ 130.00) in case of foreign bidders to defray courier expenses.

For purposes of clarifying certain issues, interested parties are invited to a clarificatory meeting to be held on December 20, 2005 10:00 A.M. at the BAC Conference Room, Bldg. V, PNOC-EDC, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines. Site inspection will be held thereafter at the exploration site in Sibugay, Zamboanga, Philippines (to be scheduled later).

Interested parties shall submit their respective Letter of Intent and sealed Application for Eligibility in three (3) sets to the PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat, PNOC-Energy Development Corporation, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines not later than 5:00 P.M. on January 5, 2006. The parties' Application for Eligibility will be evaluated and parties who are eligible to bid will be notified by PNOC-EDC.

Eligible parties shall then be required to submit their Financial Proposal in two separate sealed envelopes. All bids submitted by eligible parties must be accompanied by a bid security, callable on demand and valid for a period of One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days reckoned from the date of bid opening, for an amount of at least Philippine Peso One Hundred Seventy-Eight Thousand Eighty (PhP178,080.00), if in the form of cash, cashier's check / manager's check, or certified check, Philippine Peso Two Hundred Sixty-Seven Thousand One Hundred Twenty (PhP267,120.00), if in the form of a bank guarantee, or Philippine Peso Four Hundred Forty-Five Thousand Two Hundred (PhP445,200.00), if in the form of a surety bond. The bids must be delivered to:

Bids and Awards Committee
c/o PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat
PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio
Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines

At or before 2:00 P.M. on January 27, 2006. Bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidders' representative who chose to attend.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders on the ground of PNOC-EDC's action

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 13 & 20, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF JUNK ITEMS

DATE OF BIDDING : January 12, 2006, 2:00 p.m., Solarium Hall, Bldg.-1 Grd. Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at various NPC stations.

SCHEDULE - I

Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1. Used transformer oil "PCB" Free, approx. 120,000 liters, located at Bataan Nuclear Plant, Napot Point, Morong, Bataan	P14.00/liter

Note: **Interested parties who wish to secure bid form for the above items must be accredited waste oil processors/treaters and must present valid DENR Permit to Operate and Discharge Permit**

SCHEDULE - II

Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1. One (1) lot, structure for dismantling Fabrication Shop surrounding structures, assorted scrap metals, construction equipment/tools, fabrication machines and other junk items located in the Fabrication shop	P3,324,000.00

Note: **The sale shall include clean up of the perimeters of the fabrication shop and the surrounding structures.**

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. **PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OFFER.**
2. **LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2004) ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY OF THE BIDDER**
3. **TAX CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE OF THE BIDDER**

INTERESTED PARTY WHO WISH TO SECURE BID FORM MUST PRESENT ONE (1) VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVER'S LICENSE, GSIS ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P550.00/set from Mr. A. D. Alday, Manager, Warehousing, Inventory, Traffic and Asset Disposal Division (WITADD) at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 922-8431. **Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 p.m. January 11, 2006.**

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI - Dec. 12, 13 & 14, 2005)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC

Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel No. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320; Fax no. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites qualified contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING (NDT) SERVICES FOR THE NORTHERN NEGROS GEOTHERMAL PROJECT – FLUID COLLECTION AND REINJECTION SYSTEM
EDC 05-202

The Approved Budget is PhP 3,428,509.48 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 200 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o Francis T. Tolibas local 5179) starting December 13, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (PhP 500.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on December 15, 2005 at 10:00 p.m. at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Building V, PNOC-EDC, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

The application for eligibility, letter of intent and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, PNOC-EDC, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila not later than 2:00 p.m. **(Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time)** of January 4, 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Dec. 13 & 20, 2005)

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dti
DEPARTMENT OF
TRADE & INDUSTRY
PHILIPPINES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING/CONSULTATION

The Department of Trade and Industry will hold a public hearing/ consultation on the "Proposed Simplified and Uniform Rules of Procedure for Administrative Cases Filed with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)" on 15 December 2005, Thursday, 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 NN, at the CWTRG Public Hearing Room, 2/F, DTI Building, 361 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

The full text of the Rules can be accessed at the http://business.gov.ph.

You may submit your written comments at ftd-btrcp@dti.dti.gov.ph or to the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection (BTRCP), 2/F DTI Building, 361 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. Attention: The Director

For further inquiries, please call at telephone number 7510384 loc. 2224, 2225, 2227, 2228.

(PDI–Dec. 13, 2005)

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5th DOLE Research Conference

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE) will hold the 5th DOLE Research Conference in Manila on Dec. 13 to 14 aimed at sustaining the progress in the country's thrusts to uplift the informal sector (IS), and other relevant directions.

Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas is expected to grace the event to apprise the participants on policies and programs where research should focus on.

The event, on the theme "Look Back to Step Forward," would also feature the Partners' Forum in the afternoon of Dec. 14 joined by representatives of the informal sector, the social partners or labor and management, the academic community, and others. The forum is an opportunity for the sectors to share their insights on research priorities. Their invited representatives are expected to discuss and answer the question: "What do you think should be the focus of DOLE's researches and why?"

Three relevant researches from DOLE bureaus and agencies will be presented in the course of the two-day conference. They are "The Philippine Labor Index" by the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES); "Faces of Local Tripartism" by the Institute for Labor Studies (ILS), and; "Critical Skills" by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authorit y (TESDA).

The reactors include Directors Ma. Luisa Gigette S. Imperial of the Bureau of Local Employment, Liberty T. Casco of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Lawyer Rebecca C. Chato of the National Conciliation and Mediation Board, and Raymundo G. Agravante of the DOLE-Region 4-A (Calabarzon) office.

DOLE Assistant Secretary Arturo L. Sodusta will discuss the development of the DOLE 2006 research agenda at the conference's closing day.

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region – IX Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 9911828, (062) 9850884, Fax No. (062) 9911339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested Labor Services' Contractor, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the in-warehouse handling of the 2006 NFA imported/local rice and/or palay at the following areas:

Warehouse/Province	Estimated Volume (in bags of 50 kgs.)	Approved Rate per Bag of 50 kgs.	Approved Budget (In Pesos)
1. Zamboanga City Warehouses	3,580,000	1.70	6,086,000.00
2. Taway GID Whse, Ipil ZS	232,000	2.00	464,000.00
3. Guilawa Whse, Malangas ZS	148,000	2.00	296,000.00
4. Tiguma GID Whses, Pag. ZDS	410,000	1.75	717,500.00
5. Culo GID Whse, Molave, ZDS	90,000	1.75	157,500.00
6. Gulayon GID Whse, ZDN	452,000	2.00	904,000.00
7. FSC Whse, S. Osmeña, ZDN	34,000	2.00	68,000.00
8. Lituban Whse, Siocon ZDN	36,000	2.00	72,000.00
9. Banigan Whse., Liloy, ZDN	90,000	2.00	180,000.00
TOTAL	5,072,000		8,945,000.00

All labor contractors interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a nonrefundable fee of Php 3,500.00 to the NFA in Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated below.

Prospective bidders should have the experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use nondiscretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date and Time
• Last Day of Application for Registration/renewal of interested bidders who are not NFA accredited cargo handling operators or / with expired registration	December 14, 2005/8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
• Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & Issuance of Bid forms	December 8-9; 14-16, 2005
• Pre-Bid Conference*	December 20, 2005 / 2:00 P.M.
• Opening of Bids*	**January 5, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.**
• Bid Evaluation	January 6-10, 2006
• Post-Qualification	January 11-15, 2006
• Notice of Award	January 20, 2006

* Venue will be at the NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zambo, City.

The National Food Authority assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA
OIC-Office of the ARM, and
Chairman, NFA-IX BAC

(PDI – December 6 & 13, 2005)

DOLE celebrates 72nd year

CLOSE TO 2,000 CHILD WORKERS AND STREET CHILDREN IN various places in Metro Manila were treated to a day of fun as their parents attended sessions on parenting and livelihood seminars during the celebration of the 72nd year anniversary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on Thursday. The DOLE anniversary was celebrated with its activities focused on child workers and street children, its second in two years.

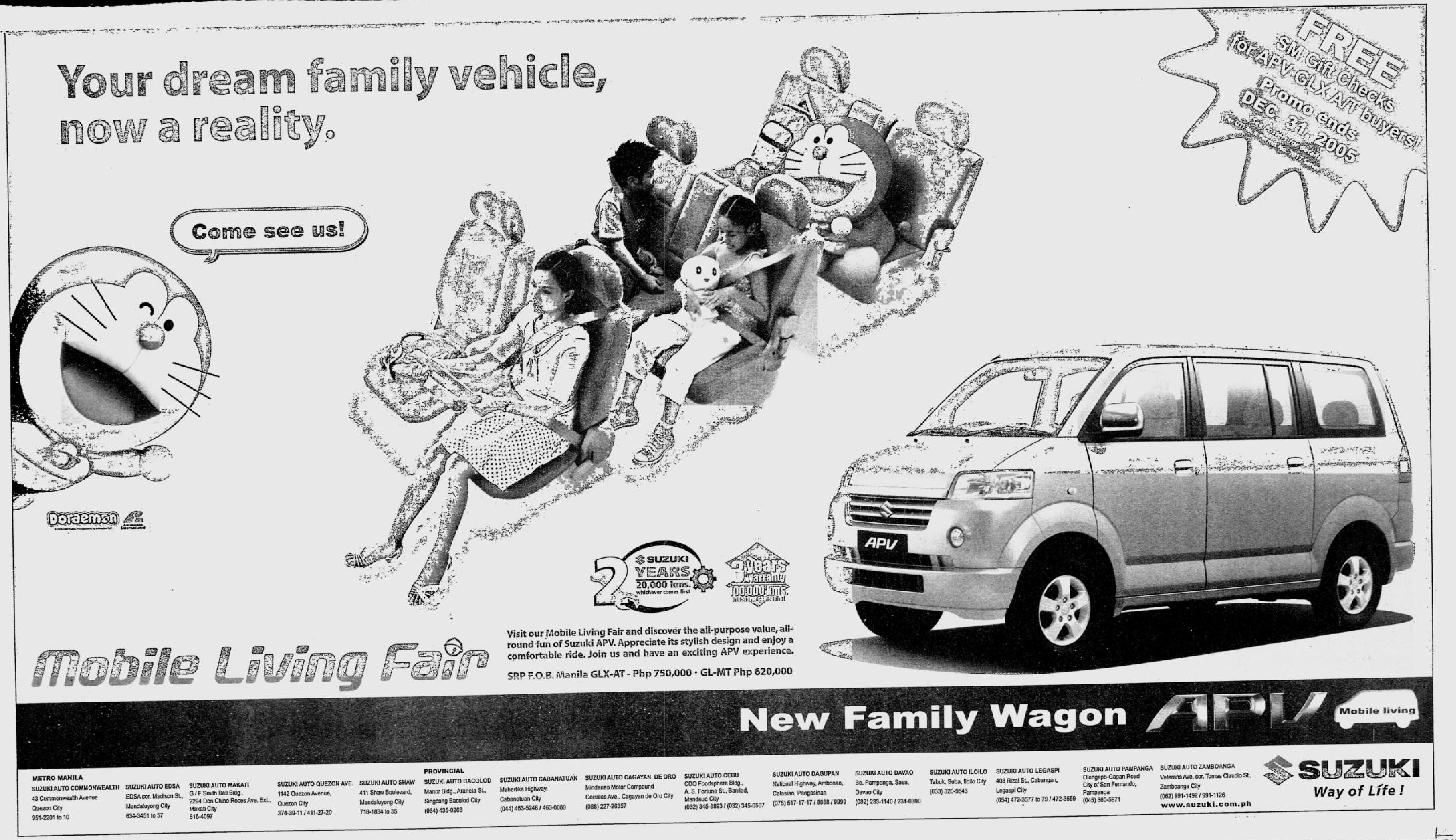
Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas said the outreach program for child workers and street children marking the DOLE 72nd year anniversary underscored the DOLE's efforts in the pursuit of the national program against child labor (NPACL).

The NPACL is a concerted effort of government, the private sector (trade unions, employers and workers group), international welfare and social development institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that aims to remove and rehabilitate children below 18 years of age from hazardous and exploitative work especially the worst forms.

The outreach program was held in various places in Metro Manila with the participation of the DOLE offices, bureaus, and attached agencies and non-government organizations such as the Educational Research and Development Assistance (ERDA), Visayan Forum, and Child Hope.

The program included the provision of medical services, sessions with parents on livelihood skills and training, book reading/story telling, parlor games, entertainment, sharing of toys and gifts. It was held simultaneously in various locations – at the Clamshell II and Seaman's Center in Intramuros, Manila; Festival Mall in Muntinlupa City, Valenzuela Astrodome in Valenzuela City; San Antonio Village in Makati City; Bgy. Socorro in Cubao, Quezon City; Bgy. Talipapa in Novaliches; Our Lady of Sorrows in Pasay City, Bgy. West Crame in San Juan; and TESDA in Taguig City.

Sto. Tomas said that the DOLE is the lead agency in the NPACL's implementation as chairman of the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC). "Celebrating the DOLE anniversary with an outreach program for the child workers and street children concretized our endeavor against child labor," the DOLE chief said.



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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◎ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◎ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◎ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◎ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Have a guilt-free yuletide season

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE USUAL FLIPPANT, DEVIL-MAY-CARE attitude rules during the holidays. "Forget the diet!" is many people's battle cry.

In truth, who can be strictly faithful to a diet?

But there is good news for dieters, though the season for celebrating has begun. Here's how you can survive the holidays guilt-free:

Erase

Remove all your apprehensions. Erase them. Most people feel defeated even before the battle has begun. Easy now. Do not feel anxious, anticipating the pain of extra inches, bulges and pounds. Your inner fears can trick you into believing they are the inevitable results of partying. They are not.

There is a wise way to feast without thinking of disaster.

Encode

Start programming yourself now. Encode into your inner computer the key word "healthy." By so doing, your brain will send signals to the rest of you to celebrate within the parameters of healthy eating and drinking.

Controlling your cravings may be a challenge at this time but just keep in mind moderation.

This means minimizing foods that, when taken in excess, can damage your health. Eat more vegetables and fruits, fish and chicken, instead.

Excess

Too much alcohol, fat, sweets and salt can be damaging to your health. Also to be avoided is lack of sleep or relaxation.

Always remember it's not just the physical to be considered here. The holidays can be stressful. In fact, if you think a vacation is stress-free, you're wrong. Studies have shown that vacation can cause stress.

Energize

One of the best ways to raise your energy is to use it. That's right. Energy begets energy. So don't think that a brisk jog, a game of badminton or a few laps in the pool will deplete you of your strength. On the contrary, you are simply conditioning your system to create more energy.

Tuning up your body takes time and effort. Just a little goes a long way. Exercise is the operative word. The yuletide season doesn't give you an excuse to be lazy and to over-indulge. On the contrary, it's the time to show your best form.

Ensure that, in the hustle and bustle of merry-making, you find time to tune off. Make it a practice to have a quiet time. Just a few minutes twice or thrice a day ought to secure your inner balance.

Yuletide bath ritual

Get a yuletide candle and turn your bathroom into a Christmas corner. Take in the holiday cheer by mixing in your warm bath an eggnog concoction. Throw in 1 cup of milk, 3 tablespoons of cinnamon, 1 teaspoon of clove, 2 eggs (beaten) and, if you like, add 2 tablespoons of brandy (optional, of course). Drink a few tiny sips of brandy to warm you while soaking.

Enjoy

Above all, this time of the year is to be enjoyed. So, give yourself permission to pursue your desires, your dreams, your delights. Life is to be celebrated not mourned. Give yourself a generous dose of self-approval. The bottom line is—if it feels good, and it's right and it's loving, then do it. This is the best yuletide gift you can give to yourself.

Yuletide affirmation

"Christmas cheer begins in me."

So eat, drink and be merry in moderation so tomorrow you won't be sorry.

Love and light!

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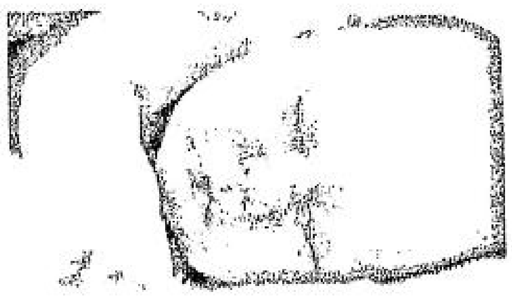


CHANGING a baby's diaper at night disrupts his sleep.

Why baby needs sleep

CHANGING A BABY'S DIAPER IN THE middle of the night can disrupt his sleep.

The first-ever Philippines Baby Sleep Survey found that five out of 10 Filipino babies go through more than one diaper change every night.

Some 58 percent of those who had a second change and 56 percent who had a third change actually woke up.

Results of the survey were presented by Pampers in the recent symposium "Discovering the Secrets of Baby Sleep."

Dr. Luis Rivera Jr., a pediatric sleep specialist from the Makati Medical Center, stressed that a peaceful night's sleep was critical to a baby's holistic development.

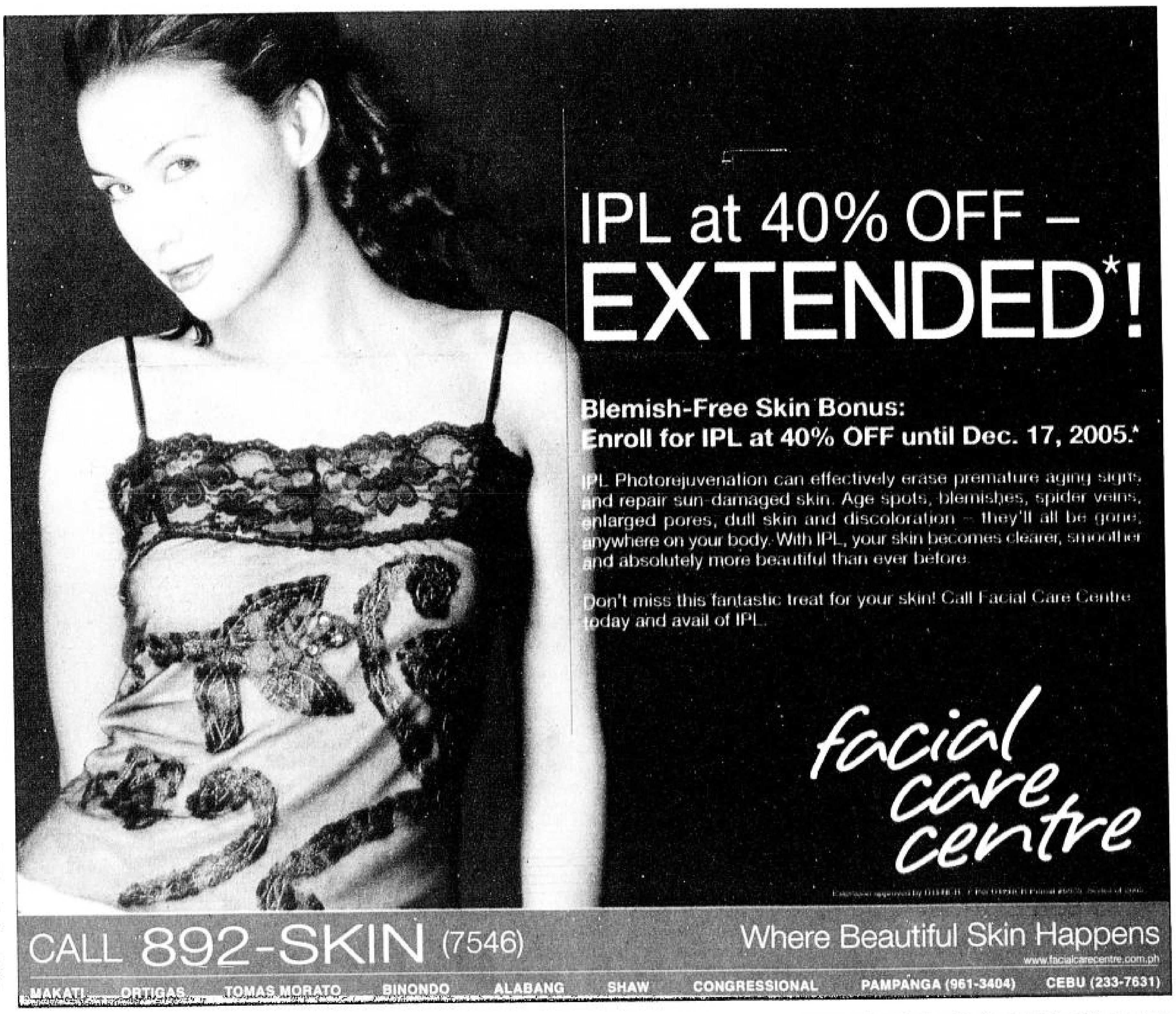
He said studies suggested that a child needed sleep for learning and memory.

Rivera said, during sleep, a child's developing brain processed the day's events and stored them in his memory.

How much sleep a child needed, he said, depended on age. An average child could sleep 10-12 hours a day, while 4-year-olds slept for up to 10 hours at night and from one to two hours at daytime. Infants slept up to 16 hours daily.

Joy Casuga of TNS Trends said Filipino mothers needed to be taught how to ensure sufficient sleep for babies.

Procter & Gamble's Pampers All Night lessens the need to change diapers at night by ensuring dryness for up to 12 hours.



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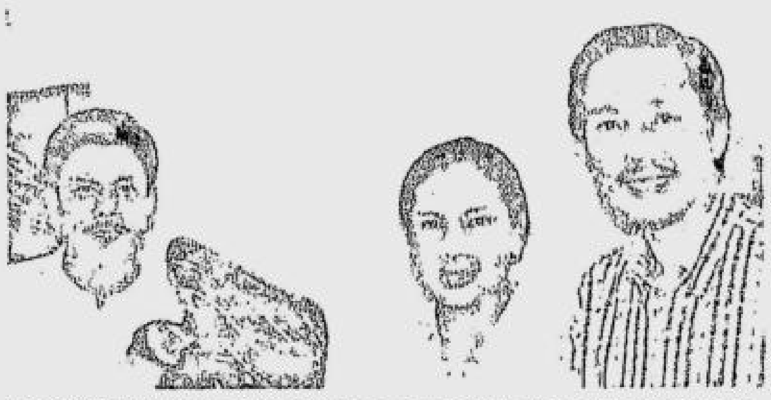
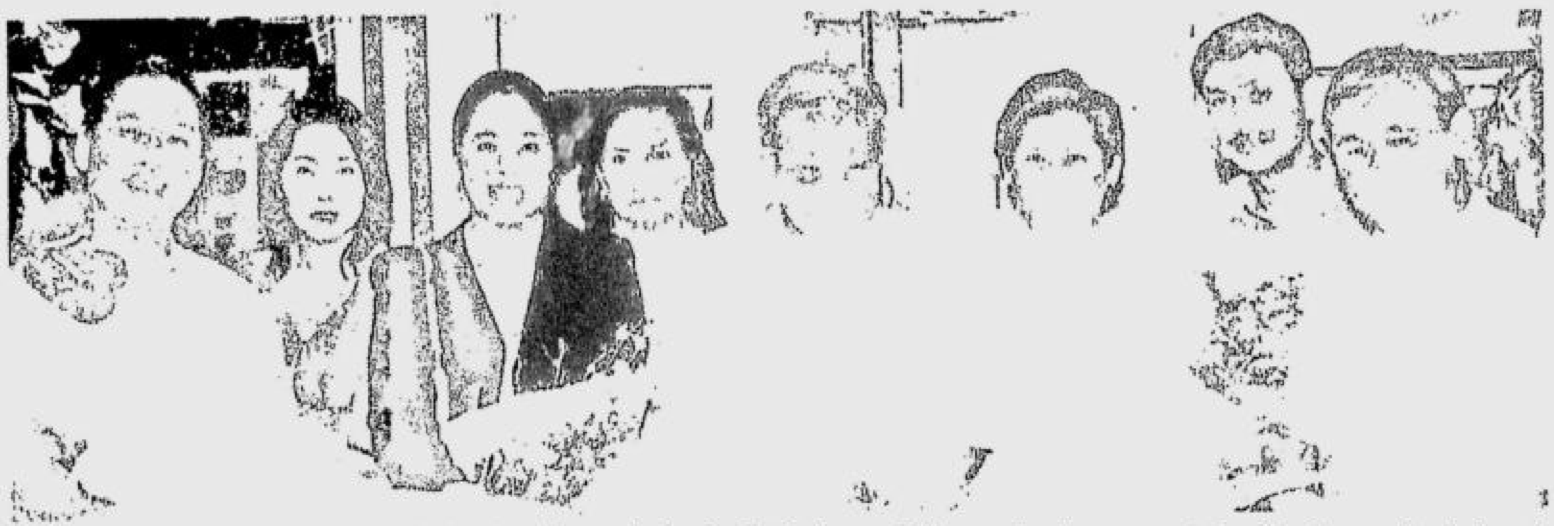
GERRY Reyes of Southeast Asia Food Inc.; Nani Reyes; Rosie Luym T. and husband, Eusebio Tanco; with the artist's widow, Emma Navarro



DOMINGO Atienza, Neth Juvida and talented glass sculptor Ramon Orlina

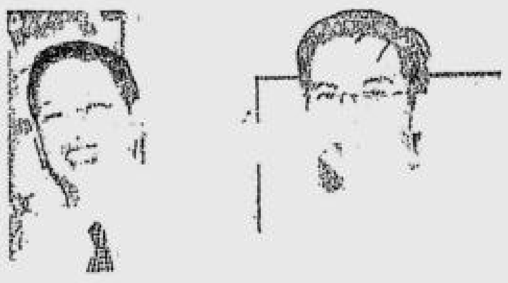
PSE president, lawyer Francis Ed. Lim; Orestes Ojeda, Lori Juvida and Manuel R. Salak III of ING Bank



HOTSHOT art lovers and collectors: Doing the ribbon-snipping for Art Exchange Gallery are business magnate Joselito Campos, Jr., chair and CEO Southeast Asia Food Inc.; Susana Lara of Arts of Asia; Olivia Campos; Lori Juvida, the Gallery's main woman; Eusebio Tanco, president of Phils. First Insurance Co. Inc. and vice chair STI execom; Rosie Luym Tanco, Orestes Ojeda and Rep. Teddy Boy Locsin.

RENNIE C. Tan and Lay Ann Orlina

RENOWNED photographer Rupert Jacinto



LAWRENCE Ong and Mark Loo

Gallery opens with Filipino master's works

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

IT WAS A REALLY EXCITING EVENT. Our town's art lovers breezed into the Art Space at Ayala Glorietta 4 for the opening of the Art Exchange Gallery.

For the inauguration, a major retrospective exhibition dedicated to the late revered National Artist **Jerry Elizalde Navarro** was mounted. It featured a *tres* exclusive collection from art connoisseurs and Art Exchange owners like **Lori Juvida**, **Jecelyn Gumila**, **Rennie Tan** and **Orestes Ojeda**.

The treasure trove of paintings by this Modernist master, "considered among the first practitioners of Abstraction in the country," traced a career going back 50 years, according to Lori Juvida. He received posthumously the award for National Artist for the Visual Arts in November 1999.

Mang Jerry, as colleagues affectionately called him, was a super close pal of Orestes O. and Lori J., a close friendship maintained to this day by his nice widow, **Emma Navarro**, who oversees his estate.

On opening night, *palanggas*, I couldn't miss our town's major players. Collectors and insiders of Cosmo Manille's art world rubbed elbows as they celebrated Philippine Modern Art, and welcomed this new cultural establishment to Manille's art scene.

Hotshot art lovers included painter **Roger San Miguel**, **Dr. Manuel Ty**, **Ester T. Gabaldon**, **Regina T. Gonzales** and Dr. **Ernie Tee**, plus loads of others art insiders like them, *palanggas*.

Superbly curated by **Billy Hudson**, the Art Exchange Gallery at the Art Space, 3/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati, offers great artworks in a setting that is a tribute to the beauty of the arts. Call 7529089.

Art and fashion

If I must say so, *palanggas*, a *tres* interesting mix of art lovers, fashion industry insiders, fashionistas and hotshot personas rubbed elbows during the double launch of the stylish Mixedenim and **Neal Oshima**'s fab book, "Philippinas Incognitas," at that lifestyle store, Mix, in Greenbelt 3.

Mix was transformed into a fabulous, cool jeans bar cum gallery, as women lounged on luxurious arrangements from the Matisse and Nolan Collections provided by Minotti. Oshima's black-and-white photographs, suspended in double-glass frames, provided a stunning ambience.

Mix's hot creative team, **Ricco** and **Tina Ocampo**, with beauteous **Mia Borromeo**, entertained the overflowing crowd that included **Frannie Aguinaldo Jacinto**, **Melissa** and **Carlos Elizalde**, our very own **Amando Doronila**, good-looker **Duane Santos**, stunningly attractive **Ching Cruz**, and eye-catching former Sen. **Loren Legarda**, plus others like them too glamorous to mention, *palanggas*.

It was fun watching the gals snatching up some of the hottest, awesome US brands for men and women: Seven for All Mankind, Habitual, Citizens of Humanity, Chip and Pepper, Ernest Sewn, Joe's Jeans, Notify, Antik Denim, Loomstate, Paper Denim, Cloth and Duarte. Disappearing from the racks faster than you can bat an eyelash were the heavily studded jeans from Seven's special edition, Great Wall Collection; Antik Denim's embellished Western jeans; and Habitual's cropped black denims, with its signature Maltese cross pockets.

Young taipan **Tito Yuchengco** and wife, *la simpatica* **Marit**; handsome French gentleman **Edouard Miailhe**; adorable **Leica Carpo** and businessman **Patxi Elizalde**, went straight for Oshima's book, dahlings.

With the soothing chamber music by the Manila Symphony Orchestra, flowing California wines, delectable, yummy Filipino fusion treats by the consistently excellent Kai's grand master chef **Gilbert Pangilinan**, and the invaluable support of Globe Platinum, the invitees mingled till the buying stopped.

Yes, *palanggas*, the secret is all in the Mix!

Panic-ville

All the invitees breezed in on time, then suddenly, bang! Brownout! It lasted for a full hour. Needless to say, while our celebrator was totally in panic-ville, her guests stayed cool. Finally lights were back and the party continued at her elegant mansion in chic Forbes Park.

Charity worker and super health enthusiast, vivaciously adorable **Teresita "Tereret" Tambunting Liboro** marked another fab year of her life, dahlings, with no less than **President Macapagal Arroyo** as *tres* special guest, *palanggas*.

The excellently prepared dinner catered by Cuillere's gourmet ladies, **Arlene Arce** and **Katrina Kuhn**, was followed by a hot Argentina tango and foxtrot ballroom dance exhibition superbly done by **Linda Floirendo Lagdameo** and **Clara Ramona**, an internationally renowned Spanish Flamenco dancer. **Emma Estrada**, founder of Centro Flamenco en Filipinas, did a sexy flamenco number. By the way, Tereret L. is also an expert flamenco dancer.

Next, **Tara Tambunting**, a grand niece of the celebrator, sang "It's My Life" and two other songs. Attractive **Teenee Chan Sola**, niece of the famous singer **Jose Mari Chan**, belted out three songs.

This super admirable persona, chair and president of the Tambunting chain of pawnshops founded four generations ago, has been involved in loads of projects for the less fortunate. Hey, check this out, *palanggas*. She built a 1,000 seating-capacity church for her mother, the late Doña **Aurora Paraiso Tambunting**, and the Tambunting Hall of the National Museum, together with her brother **Ramon**.

She and husband **Andres** donated two pavilions to the Elsie Gaches Village for 100 poor handicapped children.

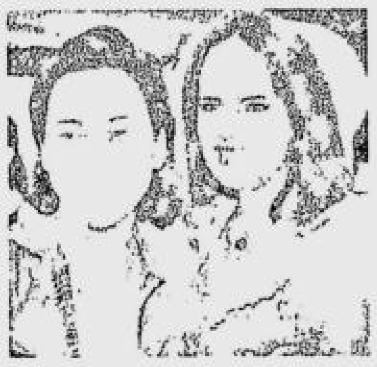
Tereret T.L. is affiliated with tons of charity organizations from the Catholic Women's Club, to the Elsie Gaches Village Inc., United Nations Foundation Movement, and Museum Foundation of the Philippines. She received the Order of Malta (Grand Dame).

It's no wonder, *palanggas*, that the celebrator insisted that, instead of gifts, the 400 guests make huge donations to the Philippines Hospitaller Foundation of Order of Malta Inc.

Yes, *palanggas*, this lady of substance, Tereret T. Liboro, is one cool woman!

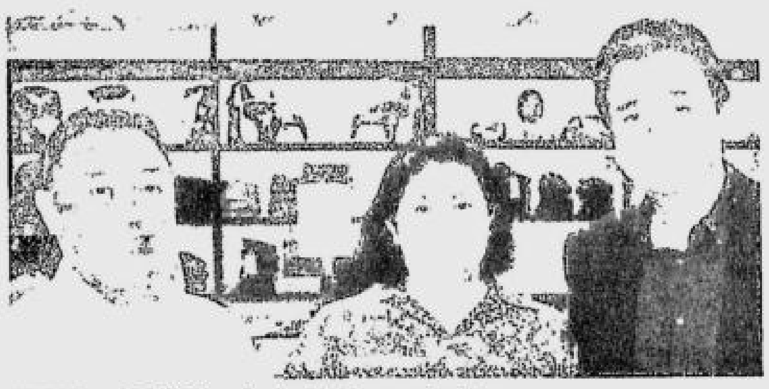
STYLISH women: Mix's fashion icon, Tina Ocampo, and Philippine Tatler's "Most Stylish" awardee, Mandy dela Rama Santos

MIX, Kai and Kitchen's main man, Ricco Ocampo, and socialite Margarita Delgado



JEANS GALS: Rina Ortiz and Kerri Uytengsu

PATXI Elizalde, Mia Borromeo and Marit Yuchengco



JERRY and Lulli Jalandoni with Ramon Jacinto

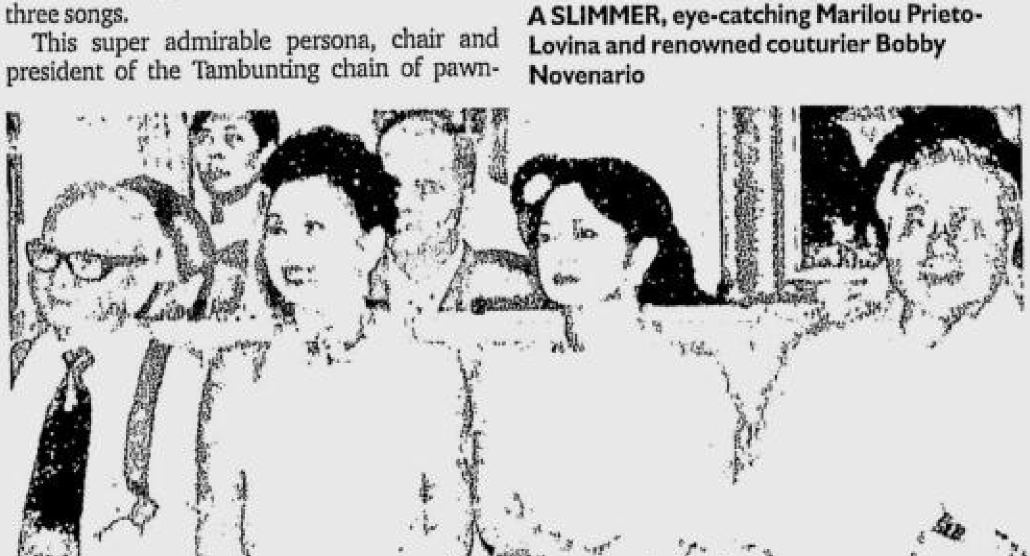
GANG of four: Mons Tantoco, Tatler's Anton San Diego, Christina Brandner and vivaciously fun Fiona Ottiger

CONSUL Vince Carlos and world-class couturier Pitoy Moreno

A SLIMMER, eye-catching Marilou Prieto-Lovina and renowned couturier Bobby Novenario

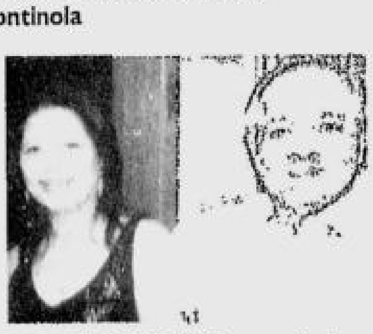
OLD-WEALTH socialites: Justa Tantoco, Dr. Sol Consing, the celebrator, and Ching de las Alas Montinola

DELLY Tambunting Ongsiako and Mila Tambunting



BUSINESS tycoon Andy Liboro, celebrator Teresita Tambunting Liboro, special guest President Macapagal Arroyo, and Philippine Ambassador to Mexico Tonet Lagdameo. Seated behind the celebrator is KLM's GM for Southeast Asia II, Ihab Sorial.

CONSUL Evie Costa and Babbit Goudsmith



PORCELAIN-LIKE beauty Baby Serrano A. and husband Bomboy Araneta

Message from (and in) water

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IN THE '70S, AMERICAN polygraph expert Cleve Backster raised eyebrows in the scientific world with his revelation, born out of years of painstaking research, that plants reacted to human emotions and human thought.

Writers Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird summarized Backster's experiments in their book, "The Secret Life of Plants."

And now, in the 21st century, a Japanese doctor of alternative medicine, Masaru Emoto, is shocking the scientific community with his discovery that even water molecules react to human emotions and thoughts.

He proved it by showing pictures of water crystals that changed shapes depending on what type of emotions, sounds and thoughts they were exposed to, as described in his fascinating book, "Message from Water."

I first learned about the work of Dr. Emoto about two years ago from an Austrian researcher who showed me the book written in Japanese. I acquired an English version of the book only this month from my Japanese friend Dr. Nagato Azuma, an ophthalmologist with interest in alternative medicine.

Unknown

He never heard of Dr. Emoto, who was also from Yokohama like him, until I asked him to look for the book in Japan. Apparently, Dr. Emoto is more popular outside Japan than in his own country.

How did Dr. Emoto make his outstanding discoveries about water? He exposed distilled water to various conditions and then froze it. He then took pictures of the resulting crystals through a microscope. The crystals looked like snow flakes.

When water was exposed to beautiful classical music, such as Beethoven's "Pastorale," Mozart's "Symphony No. 40 in G Minor," or Bach's "Goldberg Variations," the water crystals formed were symmetrical and beautiful. When exposed to heavy metal music, the crystal's basic well-formed hexagonal structure broke up into perfect pieces.

"The water seems to have reacted negatively to this music," according to Dr. Emoto. When exposed to Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel," he obtained three types of crystals: "The first is a picture of a heart broken into two, the second shows two parts trying to fuse together and the third shows a newly formed heart that overcame the difficult period."

Now here's something else Dr. Emoto discovered. When he posted a typewritten Japanese word that meant "You fool" outside the bottle of distilled water, leaving it overnight, the resulting crystal formation was similar to that caused by exposure to heavy metal music, scattered and in disarray.

When exposed to the words "You make me sick; I will kill you!" the water crystal formed was ugly. It was distorted, imploded and dispersed.

When exposed to the words "I love you," the crystal formed was beautiful. "Just by expressing love and gratitude," said Dr. Emoto, "the water around us and in our bodies changes so beautifully."

Health implications

Since a human body is made up of 75 percent water, imagine the implications of these findings on our health and well-being!

Philippine healers or *albularios* have long practiced blowing powerful *oracion* or power words on water before asking patients to drink it. I used to laugh at this practice because I could not see any connection between that "silly" act and healing. Now, I may have to revise my initial skepticism and reaction to it.

Perhaps the priest or shaman's act of blessing the water has a similar effect. I have heard stories where the color of water inside a sealed bottle changes right before the eyes of a multitude once blessed by a powerful healer.

In the '90s, an American research scientist found that a strong intention impressed on water by a monk retarded the growth of the larva of a fly and affected the alkalinity of the liquid, though it was brought 50 miles away from where the monk first directed those intentions.

Dr. Emoto discovered a similar effect. When asked in an interview by Reiko Myamoto Dewey, whether distance made any difference when people prayed over water, Dr. Emoto replied: "We have only experimented once with that. But from that experiment, distance did not seem to matter. The intentions and prayers of the person still influenced the water... However, my feeling is what would make a difference is the purity of intent of the person doing the prayer."

"Is there a time lag on the effect on water, or is it immediate?" he was further asked.

Dr. Emoto replied, "In these cases, we would freeze the water right away, so we could say the water is changed immediately."

After reading all these reports on the amazing effect of thoughts and emotions on water, I can never look at water in the same way ever again! Before drinking water in a restaurant, I would now like to know first what the mood was of the waiter who poured it into the glass.

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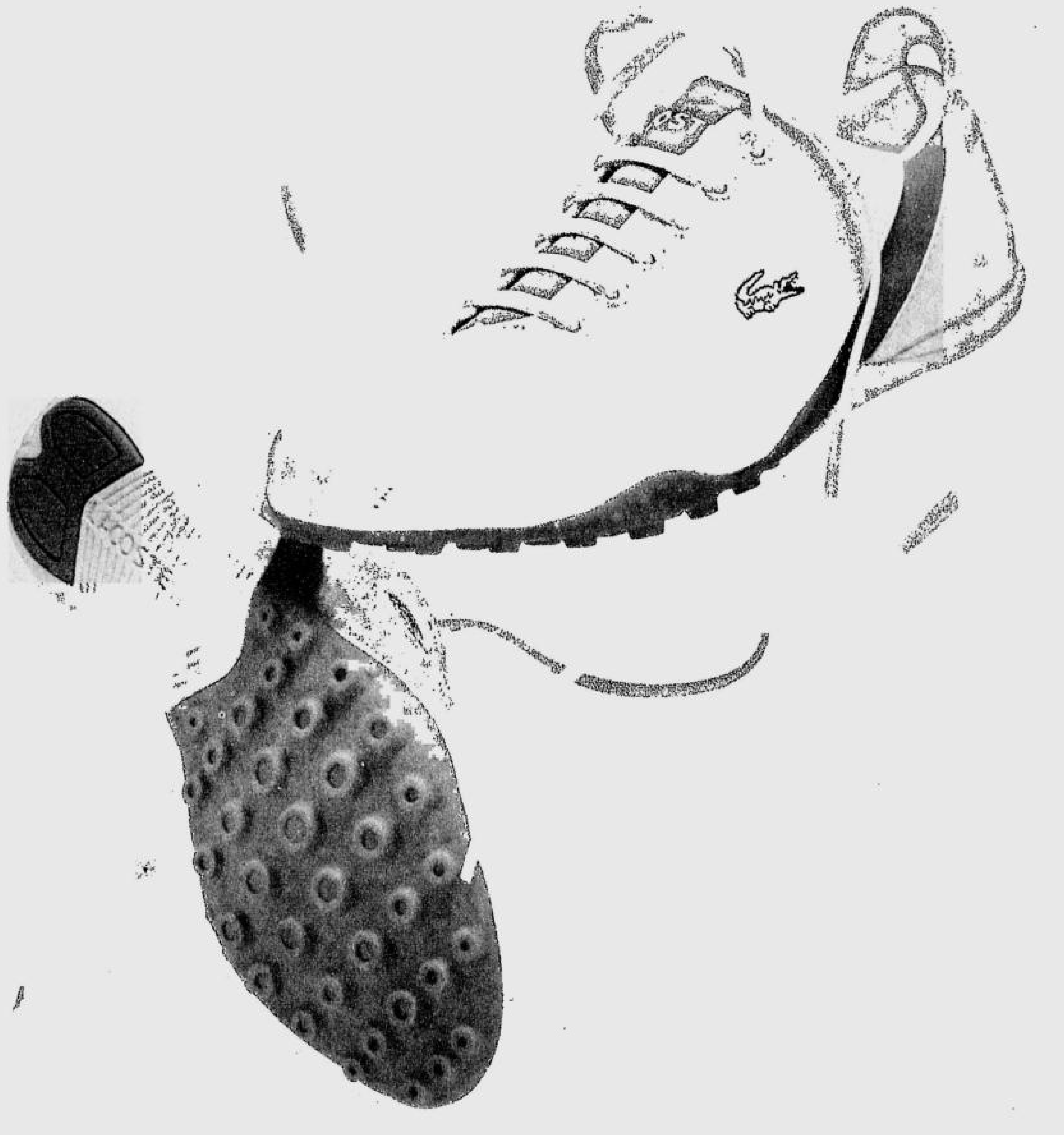
Some experts say four slices of wheat bread each day provides some 10 grams of fiber. It is suggested that the body needs 25-40 grams of fiber a day.

Proper diet, including sufficient intake of fiber, should be complemented with adequate rest, regular exercise, healthy relationships, and a positive outlook in life, for good health and well-being.



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Fitness beliefs can get you in trouble

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

WHAT YOU BELIEVE DETERMINES how you will act. This is true for fitness beliefs you may have acquired over the years.

Some are just a little eccentric like believing that exercise is effective only if you do it in the morning. But some ideas can get you into trouble because they have the potential to cause harm.

No pain, no gain

Many people believe that unless exercise "hurts" in some way, it isn't doing them any good. This is dangerous because they may continue exercising even when in pain thinking this is the way exercise is supposed to be.

A minor problem that may be easily solved by changing the exercise shoes or by modifying the way the exercise is done becomes a chronic problem.

Exercise does require some effort for you to improve your fitness level (that's why it's called working out) but you should never feel pain in the joints or muscles. If it hurts, stop, slow down, or modify your exercise.

Drinking water

Some people don't drink water during exercise believing it will cause stomach cramps. This is not a good idea. You need to replace immediately the water you lose through sweat when you work out.

Water is the most important element to an exercising individual because performance is directly related to your state of hydration.

Some people also believe that drinking lots of water will make them fat. You might wonder who would ever believe that but I've met intelligent people who have fallen for the erroneous belief. They usually complain of being bloated or *manas*.

The more you limit your body's intake of water, the more the body tries to retain whatever little you give it. A simple way to know if you are drinking enough water is to look at the color of your urine. Experts say it will be dark yellow if you are drinking too little and pale yellow or almost clear if you are getting enough water.

Sweat

"The more you sweat, the more fat you lose." This is several beliefs rolled into one. First is the belief that all weight lost on the scale equals fat loss. So when people lose three pounds from sweating in the sauna, they assume they have lost three pounds of fat. Actually, they only lost three pounds of water.

The second belief is that if you are not actively sweating while exercising, very few calories are being burned. People don't realize that the temperature and humidity of the surroundings also affect the rate of perspiration when you exercise.

Running on a treadmill in an air-conditioned gym may produce less visible sweat than standing outside in the heat of the noonday sun and yet will burn many more calories.

The third belief is using rubberized or plastic clothing while exercising produces even more sweat and thus "burns more fat." This is dangerous because you can overheat causing your heart to work harder than it should.

Exercising to lose weight

Exercising only to lose weight gets people into trouble because: First, losing weight with the help of exercise is a slow process so people get frustrated and stop exercising. Second, even if they are patient, they stop exercising as soon as they reach their goal.

Either way, this attitude is detrimental to their health because they miss out on all the other benefits like improved cardiovascular efficiency, a better immune system, less stress, better sleeping patterns, cancer protection and normal blood pressure.

Besides, they will probably eventually put back the weight they lost because lack of physical activity was one reason they were overweight in the first place.

Eating junk

"I can eat whatever I want because I exercise." The quality of food you eat makes a big difference to your health. Regular exercise is no excuse to eat junk. Exercise will protect you to some extent but there is no substitute for good nutrition. You may be super-fit but your arteries can still be clogged from eating the wrong things.

Instructors

The sexy figure of a female instructor or big muscles of a male instructor do not necessarily mean they are knowledgeable on the principles of fitness. It can simply mean they are genetically blessed.

The danger in believing in a well-endowed instructor with no professional training is you are putting your body and health in the hands of an individual who only knows what works for his/her own body. Since everyone has different needs, the exercise program that works for the instructor can actually be harmful for you.

Many professionally trained instructors may not meet your standard of what "fit" looks like. This doesn't mean they are not good at what they do. Judge their competence more by the kind of professional training they had rather than mere appearance.

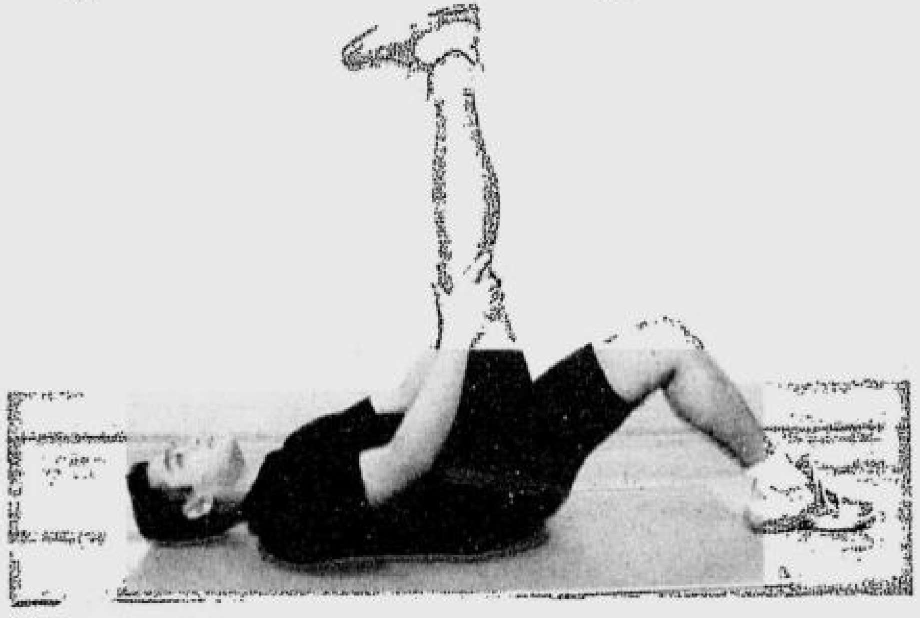
It may be hard to take advice from someone who looks more out of shape than you. So, while I don't believe that fitness instructors should have a Miss or Mr. Universe-type body, they should at least be firm and not flabby and have strength and stamina.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

no pain
no gain!

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Supine hamstring stretch



THIS EXERCISE STRETCHES THE HAMstrings or back of the thighs.

Equipment

Exercise mat

Exercise technique

1. Lie on your back with one leg bent and the other straight.
2. Without holding the leg, pull it toward your head. You will feel your hamstring stretching.
3. Place both your hands behind your thigh and slowly walk your hands up toward the ankle. This will gently pull your leg even more toward your head.
4. Hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds. Continue to breathe normally.
5. Do the other leg.

Performance tips

1. Keep your leg as straight as you can without feeling any pain.
2. Keep buttocks on the floor. Do not allow your back to curl.
3. If you flex your foot, you will also feel a stretch in the calf.

Repetitions

Do one to three times.

THE NOËL line blends scents evocative of a winter wonderland.

Sweet smell of the season

CRABTREE & EVELYN HAS OPENED A Christmas store at Lifestyles on the second floor of Rockwell's Power Plant Mall.

This Christmas, the label is making available its Noël Home Fragrance Collection. Inspired by Russia's "Magnificent Age," the collection incorporates handcrafted items such as cut glass candles and gifts finished with hand-tied ribbons.

Noël blends rare ingredients of frankincense with spices, cranberry, orange and Siberian fir for a fragrance evocative of a winter wonderland.

Receive a limited edition vintage-design Crabtree & Evelyn Winter Games mug with a minimum purchase of P4,000 net. Offer is good while supplies last.

Noël product list includes: Environmental Oil with Dropper 9ml, P600; Environmental Oil with Light Bulb Ring 9ml, P950; Room Spray 100ml, P800; Botanical Potpourri 2.2L, P1,600; New Object Potpourri, P1,450; Pillar Candle 3x6, P1,250; New Glass Tea Light Globe, P2,200.

Meanwhile, Crabtree & Evelyn Robinsons Place celebrates its anniversary by offering until Dec. 31 a free gift of an Aloe Vera Traveller Set worth P750 with a net purchase of P4,800.

Crabtree & Evelyn shops are at R2 Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, 8970157; Level 2 Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City, 6352895; Greenbelt 1 Ayala Center, Makati City, 8674738; Upper Ground Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, 6330173; and 2nd Level, Padre Faura Wing, Robinsons Place Manila, 4006427.

Mag shares healthy recipes

THIS DECEMBER, MEN'S HEALTH, THE world's largest men's magazine, suggests five guilt-free dishes that may be added to the Noche Buena spread. Enjoy Beef Tenderloin, Asian Caesar Salad, Fried *Tilapia* in Tamarind Sauce, and Porkloin in Plum Sauce without having to worry about extra calories and cholesterol.

The magazine also tells you how videogames can help get you in shape. Hanging out at the video arcade can help sharpen your reflexes and make your fitness routine more fun.

Men's Health is now available at magazine stands and bookstores at P120 a copy. Log on to www.menshealth.com.ph.

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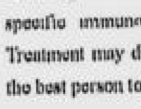

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What causes Asthma and what are the available treatment methods?

Asthma is a chronic, reversible disease of hyperresponsive airways. Predisposing factors include a history of allergy in the family or other types of allergy in the individual. Causal factors include indoor allergens, such as housedust mites, animal dander, cockroach allergens and fungi; outdoor allergens like pollens and fungi and other occupational sensitizers. Other factors would also contribute to asthma development such as respiratory infections, diet, air pollution and smoking. Exercise, weather changes and food may also exacerbate asthma. The best treatment for asthma is avoidance. If avoidance cannot be done adequately, controller medications in the form of inhaled steroids with a β2 agonist like Seretide or Symbicort may be given to control asthma and β2 agonist. Sometimes physicians will also add anti-leukotriene drugs like Montelukast or Zafirlukast. For attacks reliever medications like salbutamol, terbutaline or procaterol are prescribed for asthma attacks. The preferred route is through metered dose inhalers, dry powder form, or through nebulizers. In allergic asthma and if avoidance is not possible, specific immunotherapy may be performed by trained physician. Treatment may differ from patient to patient and your physician is still the best person to evaluate your individual therapy.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from The Doctors Hospital in Bacolod City, Dr. Rafaelito Salvador. Doc Ranny is specializes in IM-Allergology and Immunology. He obtained his medical degree from the Manila Central University. He took his residency training for Internal Medicine from Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Hospital in 1997 and subspecialization training in Allergology and Immunology from UP-PGH in 1999. Dr Salvador is affiliated with the Philippine College of Physicians and a diplomate of the Philippine Specialty Board of Allergy and Immunology. He is married and blessed with 3 kids. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at The Doctors Hospital, Room 121, Mondays thru Fridays from 11:00am to 1pm and Saturdays from 11am to 1pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

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